CHINA

RAJA HUTHEESING

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WINDOW ON CHINA

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WINDOW ON CHINA

By

Raja Hutheesing

CASEMENT PUBLICATIONS LIMITED

BOMBAY

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PART ONE

JOURNEY TO THE WALLED CITY

ERRATA

Page 95.

Line 25. 64 lb. should read **0.64 lb.**

Line 26. 97 lb. should read **0.97 lb.**

PART ONE

I

CONDUCTED TOUR

'Those who speak know nothing!
Those who know are silent.'
These words as I am told
Were spoken by Lao-tzu.
If we are to believe that Lao-tzu
Was himself one who knew,
How comes it that he wrote a book
Of five thousand words?

PO CHU-I

The invitation to go to China on behalf of the India-China Friendship Association came early in September, 1951. After many years of active participation in our struggle for freedom as a member of the Indian National Congress, I had left politics for journalism. I felt the frustration and despair of the Indian people who had hoped that free India would fight against misrule, oppression and poverty. But our leadership had been found wanting and millions continued to live without hope in hunger and ignorance. China seemed to offer a new way by which the Asian people could acquire the means of improving their lot. I was eager to see for myself the achievements of the Chinese people.

I had waited for this opportunity for many years. My association with China had begun in 1937, when as secretary to the China Aid Committee of the Indian National Congress, I had helped to organize a medical unit to go to Chungking as a token of our sympathy with the Chinese people in their struggle against Japanese aggression. Since then, I had read everything about China I could get hold of. Writers like Edgar Snow, Epstein and Gunther Stein had praised Mao Tse-tung and his achievements at Yenan. They

had said that the Communist Party of China cared little for dogma and in fact acted as 'liberal land reformers' in order to unify the country and provide it with a progressive administration. Imperialism and corruption had oppressed the Chinese people for centuries and many problems which they face today are similar to what we in India and other underdeveloped countries of Asia face.

Hunger, ignorance, want and misery had made the life of the Chinese cheap and tawdry, yet they had kept their gentle smile and their love of peace. For two thousand years India and China had lived as peaceful neighbours following many common pursuits in co-operation and mutual understanding. We had learned much from each other of art, religion, philosophy and literature. Centuries ago, travellers had crossed the Himalayas and the Central Asian deserts to draw inspiration and strength from one another and had left their imprint behind at Taxshila, Lung-men and Tatung. Today, with the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek, China is united and vast changes have taken place under the determined leadership of Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party. The Communists in India claimed that the standard of living of the Chinese people was improving daily; that the great river valley projects had been completed ahead of schedule by the sheer determination of millions who joyfully worked for the nation; that education, housing and medical care were rapidly improving while India floundered in food shortages and cloth rationing.

The Communists insist that in the People's Democracy there are no concentration camps, no subjugation of the people's will by fear, no suppression of the liberties of the individual. They claim there is democracy for the people and dictatorship only over the evils of corruption, imperialistic exploitation and reaction. China, they say, provides all the answers to men who believe in national freedom, individual liberty and the right to food, shelter, clothing and equal opportunity. I did not want to question this *fang-shen*, or renewal of the body, which many propagandists claimed was going on in China. It is for the Chinese to decide what is good for them. The Indians would only be too glad if our neighbour and ancient colleague had found the means of achieving the happiness of her

people. I thought that I might learn much of help to my country if I went there.

So I readily accepted the opportunity to visit China for six weeks in October and November, 1951, on behalf of the India-China Friendship Association as a guest of various Chinese groups. Before I left I made arrangements with the Press Trust of India to send them reports for publication in Indian newspapers. Our itinerary included a stay of two weeks in Peking on the occasion of the second anniversary of the People's Democracy on October 1, 1951. Then we visited Mukden, Tientsin, Nanking, Shanghai and Canton, so that we might see for ourselves the agricultural and industrial achievements of New China. The trip also included a visit to villages under land reform and to Hangchow, a health resort. After six weeks, I returned home.

As we travelled from one city to another and went to institutions, industrial plants and official receptions, we listened to speeches telling us of various achievements under the leadership of the Communist Party since the liberation of the country. District officers, managers of industry, government officials and ministers monotonously repeated as facts what proved in reality to be propaganda claims. Newspapers, magazines and books all followed set formulas and there were no differences of opinion, no contradictions, nothing which could admit of possible alternatives. Everything was a ritual meticulously carried out to display the theoretical achievements of publicized targets. I, a visitor, moved as an automaton directed about to see and to understand only that which redounded to the glory of a totalitarian state. I realized that Communism was the new god of China, the Holy Dragon.

> Deep the waters of the black pool, coloured like ink,
> They say a Holy Dragon lives there whom men have never seen,
> Beside the pool they have built a shrine: the
> authorities have established a ritual,
> A Dragon by itself remains a Dragon, but men can
> make it a God.
>
> PO CHUI-I

Once back in India, it was difficult to disentangle the facts from fiction while the numerous impressions of six weeks crowded into

my mind. I was anxious to return, if I could, without the obligations of a guest to his host, and find confirmation or contradiction. I knew the Press Trust of India was anxious to establish a permanent representative in Peking, so that Indian newspapers could be supplied with news on China. The Government of India also wanted an independent news service to function from China, as they believed it would promote a better understanding between the peoples of the two countries. I therefore spoke little on China, knowing that any expression of views on my part would close the doors of China against me.

In March, 1952, the Government of India announced that an official Cultural Delegation was to visit China on the occasion of the May Day celebrations. When the Press Trust asked me if I was willing to go as a correspondent and develop their contact with China once again, I seized the opportunity. My first itinerary in China was extended by a visit to the Huai River project and to the cultural relics of Tatung and the Confucius Temple.

I returned to China as a journalist. I knew the difficulties of travelling about and finding living accommodation as a private visitor. I had to have an identity card to move about, needed permits to travel and secure quarters, and required facilities to change money. I therefore asked the assistance of the External Affairs Ministry in requesting the Indian Ambassador at Peking, Mr Pannikar, to obtain these for me before I accepted the assignment. Because the Chinese were willing to welcome me, I was told that all the preparations would be made. Nonetheless, I left India with many misgivings, for I knew the Chinese really welcomed only Communist journalists.

I was perturbed as well because a personal note I had written to the Prime Minister about conditions in China had been circulated to the members of the Indian Delegation by the Ministry through a careless secretary. The note had indicated there was little economic progress in China despite the claims of exportable food surplus. If it fell into Chinese hands, I knew I would be placed in an awkward situation. I asked the Ministry to withdraw the note, but it was too late.

An incident at Canton on arrival created further difficulties. One

of the Delegates wanted to photograph a poor Chinese child carrying a younger child on its back, and asked me to help pose the children. When he had snapped his picture, I began to take one too, and was suddenly interrupted by the interpreter who covered the lens of my camera. The next morning I was informed by the secretary of the Delegation that the Chinese had complained I was trying to photograph 'restricted areas.' I was surprised, and offered to hand over my film, but was merely told that as a foreign correspondent I had to obtain a permit to use my camera. The incident, I thought, ended there as far as the Chinese were concerned.

On arrival at Peking, I inquired about my accreditation papers from the Embassy officials. I was told I had only to sign some papers and wait half an hour or so for my card. I did not know then that I would have to wait seven days for it because the Indian Ambassador, Mr Pannikar, had decided that I was an 'undesirable person.'

Mr Pannikar is a short, heavy man with a goatee, whose eyes twinkle with self-conscious pleasure at his own remarks. He is a quick, clever conversationalist who has been described as an 'intellectual hedgehog with every spine erect and quivering with ideas.' For many years he served the Indian Maharajas and acquired the habit of mind which wants to please the powers that be at all times, and by now is everything to all men and believes only in himself. Nehru once said, 'He will be Communist in Peking and a champion of freedom in Washington so long as it takes Mr Pannikar somewhere.' In Chiang Kai-shek's China he was a believer in Kuomintang invincibility and from Nanking advised the Government of India to enter into a defence pact with Chiang in 1948. When I met him in Peking in October, 1951, after a lapse of many years, I listened to his discourses on the achievements of the New Democracy only to find that all his 'facts' were Chinese Communist propaganda.

When I came to Peking on my second visit, I was a journalist known to have opposed the Congress Party during the Indian elections, and in my note on China I had dared to contradict Mr Pannikar's views. He had therefore decided to prevent me from carrying out my duties as a journalist. For a full week I stayed at one of the small houses of the Indian Embassy sharing a room

with a friend, without food, without money, without any permit that would enable me to move about the city, until I cabled to the Press Trust of India and sought the intervention of the External Affairs Ministry in order to obtain my accreditation.

During this 'imprisonment' I was kept in the dark about the reasons for the difficulties. Mr Pannikar had said the Chinese had secured my note and thought it cause for objection. I later learned that he had complained of my views on China to the Indian Delegation. To the Ministry, in turn, he had reported the photograph incident at Canton. When the Ministry requested further explanations, he said he was trying to get my personal status – not my journalistic standing – recognized by the Chinese.

When, at last, accreditation was obtained, a new sort of censorship inhibited me. I was told the Indian Embassy had had to assure the Chinese that I would not send out any reports detrimental to them, and that, therefore, all my dispatches would have to be cleared by the Embassy before being sent. I was further instructed that I could report only the activities of the Indian Delegation and not participate in question periods during their visits to various institutions. I learned, eventually, that these conditions had not been imposed by the Chinese at all, and once we left Peking I did as I chose.

Normally I would have asked my employers to recall me, but I was anxious to retrace my steps along what was now a familiar route. I had no desire to listen again to the monotonous official statements and was content, instead, to let my eyes wander and note the changes that had occurred between my two visits, and to bring some order into the many impressions I had gathered.

My first visit had taught me that any journey through China was a conducted tour and all talks, meetings and contacts were possible only under the watchful eyes of the interpreters and through them, since the Chinese even when they knew English refused to speak it. I met many university professors who were graduates of British or American universities and knew English perfectly, yet consistently refused to talk in English or admit to understanding my questions until they were translated into Chinese. Often I received answers which could only be explained on the grounds of an incorrect translation by the interpreters, whose knowledge of English

was limited; for even when the person questioned understood me his reply was dictated by the poor translation put before him.

Mme Sun Yat-sen, who had been educated in the United States, would not talk in English because, she said, she had forgotten it. Mrs Pandit, the leader of the Indian delegation, had to talk to her through an interpreter. We first met Mme Sun in October, 1951. She looked her age and had put on weight. I had heard that once upon a time she was a beautiful woman. She still has charm and a distinguished appearance. She refuses to wear the blue uniform of the Chinese Communists and each time I saw her at various receptions in October, 1951, and again in Shanghai in May, 1952, she was dressed smartly in black. Her hair, which still appeared to be black, was tightly drawn back in a bun at the back of her head. There was something frail and fragile about her walk, and throughout rather a superficial and formal interview her eyes looked wistfully sad. Perhaps the first enthusiasm of her comradeship with the Communists had worn off. Though the Communists now pay occasional tribute to Sun Yat-sen, they do not approve of giving him much importance. Unfortunately our conversation was limited to inviting her to India, for she side-stepped any discussion on the grounds of being unable to speak due to a bad cold. Our talk had begun through an interpreter, but she gradually drifted into slow but perfectly spoken English.

Mme Kung Pen, the Director of Information and Research in the Foreign Ministry, also speaks perfect English. She cross-examined me for ten minutes at the Germ Warfare Exhibition Press Conference, for she was anxious to find out my reactions to the exhibition, but she refused to speak in English when two members of the Indian Cultural Delegation went to see her at the Foreign Office in order to obtain some information on China.

A journalist colleague has defended this unwillingness to speak English as a matter of national pride and policy. I should have thought that it would be a matter of courtesy to the guests to speak to them in a language they understood. The Indian visitors to China were on a goodwill mission and were not engaged in diplomatic negotiations which require linguistic exactitude. It is a matter of policy with the Communists, and I believe it is common to all

Communist countries, that no conversation is permitted which is not checked and double-checked by a colleague. Under such scrutiny, all conversation, talks and information supplied become monotonously repetitious and add little to the knowledge of the visitor. All 'facts,' statistics and descriptions are duly repeated, often from a written script. The story is told again and again till the visitor, like the Chinese people, believes it as truth proved by all available evidence. It is not strange that many honest and well-meaning people have come back from China and reported these stories as their observations.

If we disbelieved what we were told, it may be said, what of the evidence of our eyes? Many of us who have visited China are constantly invited to tell of our experiences. Yet what could we have seen except what we were shown? It has been said that the visitor to China is conducted only to the extent that a programme is arranged for him which he is free to follow or not. But no visit to any place in China is possible without prearrangement. It is impossible for any visitor to go where he chooses, though he may decline to go where the programme expects him to go. A visit to China is a conducted tour and no other kind of tour is possible. It is not only the language difficulty which gets in the way.

A member of the Indian Delegation one day decided not to accompany the Delegation, but go instead to call on one of the foreign professors at Peking University to whom he had a letter of introduction. As it happened, the interpreter who would normally have accompanied him had gone with the Delegation. When he arrived at the university, he wandered about with the piece of paper bearing the professor's name in his hands asking people to take him to the professor. No one he met would conduct him there. After a while someone who spoke English turned up at his side and gently reminded him that it was not possible for him to see the professor or the university unless it had been arranged. The Delegate went back to the hotel, unable to see his friend. Later he was quietly informed that he should not have gone to the university, which is a restricted area, unaccompanied by the interpreter.

It is true that the guests were asked their preferences and interests. When arrangements could be made, the visitor was taken

there. Otherwise he was likely to be told that no such place or institution exists. During my first visit to Nanking, I had seen an exhibition arranged by Nanking University. Among the exhibits was the charter given to an American Mission permitting the founding of the university. This sought to prove that American 'imperialism' had planned to degrade the Chinese culture. English text-books which were merely books on politics and economics were displayed with passages marked in red pencil to convince the visitor that there was a plan to denationalize the Chinese student. I knew that millions of American dollars had gone into this university. I therefore suggested to the Indian Delegation, on my second visit, that they ask the Chinese to include a visit to this university, because some of the members were leading educators in India. When the secretary to the Delegation made the request, he was informed that no such university existed in Nanking! Apparently it was a lapse of memory. Ultimately a visit was arranged, but for only one member of the Delegation, who was able to meet one or two professors and see a few students at work.

There are innumerable such instances and to repeat them would be monotonous. I know I may be charged with stating what many others have denied. It may be that these others feel it would be discourteous to our hosts to say that facilities were not given us to see all that we wished. I feel, however, that we owe our people the truth, especially when our courteous acknowledgements are being used as facts to undermine our freedom and democracy in India, and to prove that progress lies in the Communist way.

Despite the limited activity permitted the visitor, a vivid but fleeting impression occasionally highlights one thing or another and we succeed in getting a perspective. Such a perspective, coupled with some familiarity with the economic and industrial development of China in the past, helps us to understand what has been happening in recent years. Above all what is needed is an objective mind which seeks the reality through the mass of propaganda, refusing to accept or reject until proof is obtained.

The task of knowing the reality is somewhat easier in China because she has not yet grown adept in the methods of Communism. Vast multitudes are preoccupied with the problems of daily bread,

while the country has still to be organized into a cohesive whole. Today, though China is unified and the writ of Peking runs from Mukden to Canton and Sian to Shanghai, she has still to evolve an administration which will fasten its totalitarian grip completely on the life of the people. 'Liberation' is a recent achievement, while the problems which she faces are old and of gigantic proportions. I listened for overtones, undertones and subtle changes of words by repeating my questions to as many people as I could. My reiterated questionings, though they earned me many scowls and discourtesies from the officers in charge of the visitors, brought me such interesting statements as, 'The Russians took away all the machinery from Manchuria and returned very little'; and, 'The North Koreans were impatient.'

I also had the advantage of repeating my visit after a short interval. I was thus able to check the claims of progress and compare conditions at two different periods. My political experience and economic training as the Secretary to the National Planning Committee in India during the years 1939–1942 had given me sufficient understanding of the implications of economic progress in underdeveloped countries. I know that the primary urges of oppressed and hungry people are freedom, national and individual, and the right to live as human beings with adequate food, shelter and clothing.

I have always had great admiration for the Chinese people. I am conscious that the Chinese people's struggle for freedom and peace is a part of our common struggle and our aim could be better realized by friendship for and understanding of each other. But I am also convinced that totalitarian rule enslaves and endangers peace and progress. This would perhaps have been none of our concern if the Chinese people were content with Communist rule and we could continue to live in friendship and co-operation. I have tried to put down what I have seen only because international Communism seeks to disrupt the freedom of the Asian countries by painting false pictures of China and thus rousing men, hungry for food and shelter, against their own people.

During the general elections in India I saw how the Communist claims affected the Indian voter. Many colleagues who were with me on my first trip to China were fellow-travellers of the Com-

munists who praised all we saw. The traditional sympathy and friendship between China and India strengthened such propaganda and influenced the people. Most members of the Indian Cultural Delegation were silent from considerations of courtesy. These claims of progress, therefore, continue to affect millions in Asia who are unaware that in the name of freedom, peace and progress they are being slowly led to accept the principles of a totalitarian dictatorship which will deny the very things they seek.

I realize I have only touched the fringes of a vast country and saw only what the Chinese considered was 'for view.' My observations may be overreaching and unjustified. But what little I did see must be shared with those who in their earnestness to better the lot of the common man might otherwise labour in a cause that will undermine our national freedom and democracy.

Under Gandhi I had learned the importance of rightful means, but I am not obsessed by its philosophy. I know it is foolish to ask hungry people to wait till proper means are found to obtain their needs. Yet what I have seen in China convinces me that evil means lead to success, if at all, only for a while. These means have within them the seeds of destruction of the very ends they seek to achieve.

I went to China to see whether the Chinese people have won freedom and democracy under the New Democratic Dictatorship of Mao Tse-tung. I found a government waging a ruthless class war against a section of the people who were accepted as 'friends' under the Common Programme.

I went to China to see how progress was made possible under Communism. I know Communism is a faith which claims to be the only true knowledge and denies all questionings as mere heresies. Faith is nurtured on miracles and the Communists claim many miracles of economic, cultural and scientific progress. I believe progress is possible only when men's minds are free to question, fearless to dare and open to doubt.

I found industrial stagnation for want of technical know-how. The few technical men that China has were being persecuted and put through a process of brain-washing or 'reform through labour.'

I saw that land reform had brought satisfaction to the peasants and peacetime agriculture had led to normal returns. But the

peasants' passions were now being used to further the aims and objects of a Communist dictatorship.

An ancient Taoist discourse offers a moral for today:

Hui Tzu said to Chuang Tzu: 'Can a man really become passionless?'

Chuang Tzu said: 'He can.'

Hui Tzu said: 'A man without passions cannot be called a man.'

Chuang Tzu said: 'Tao gave him substance; Heaven gave him form; how is it possible not to call him a man?'

Hui Tzu said: 'I would rather say, granted that he is still a man, how is it possible for him to be passionless?'

Chuang Tzu said: 'You do not understand what I mean. When I say passionless I mean that a man does not let love or hate do him damage within and that he falls in with the way in which things happen of themselves and does not exploit life.'

Hui Tzu said: If he does not exploit life, what is the use of his having a body?' *

I saw a great people roused into life by a new hope, but only for a while. Now they are again caught in the gathering winds of darkness which seek to crush the passions of their nation: its humanity, gentleness, tolerance and love of knowledge. The four hundred millions of China are being reduced to mere passionless bodies in the service of a dictatorship, for they have bartered their humanity for their right to eat.

* *Chuang Tzu,* translated by Arthur Waley.

PART ONE

2

PEKING

Travelling in China as an honoured guest of the Government can be a very pleasant experience. There are no air services unless the Government specially puts an army plane at the disposal of the guest, but the trains are clean and punctual, and the guests have special railway coaches to themselves. There is no hustle and bustle, as in the railway stations of democratic countries, and the few passengers who have obtained the privilege to move from one place to another are kept quiet and orderly.

The first time, I entered China from Hongkong by a few hours' journey to Canton. There were no direct trains and at the customs barrier we had to walk along the lines for more than a furlong. I saw then how well guarded the frontiers were. The Chinese traveller had to go through a proper screening before he was allowed in. There were repeated examinations of their luggage on the train by armed guards who carried Sten guns. Propaganda speeches were made and literature was sold on the train by Youth Leaguers, and every station had armed soldiers to keep watch.

Our arrival at the Canton station was a novel experience. A large number of boys and girls were lined up with flowers in their hands to give us a gala welcome. Beyond them stood in a line representatives of numerous public organizations. Shaking hands with them, we moved out and were quickly hustled into cars to be driven away to the guest house. At the guest house the local hosts again awaited us. We were then individually introduced and served with tea and fruit while we waited for rooms to be allotted to us. In the evening there was a banquet, when speeches of welcome were delivered and we replied to them expressing the goodwill and friendship of the Indian people for the Chinese people. This was the inevitable

routine which followed us wherever we went in China. It became a little monotonous towards the end.

That evening, I was reminded that I was in war-weary China. I was dressing in my room for dinner, when the air-raid sirens went off and the whole city was wrapped in darkness. I could not understand why these air-raid precaution measures were being taken and against whom. Later, when I inquired, nobody could offer any explanation except that Formosa was not far and Chiang's agents were most active in the South. During our stay of some four days in Canton we experienced these precautions three times. The ARP seemed to be a normal routine. In my report to India I wrote about them, mentioning the Chinese preparedness to meet any threat from Formosa.

Canton is one big bazaar. Every street is a continuous series of shops full of odd goods which must have come out of old hoards. There are few shoppers except in the Government Department stores. The streets have a jarring ugly appearance with the names of the shops, running down in big Chinese letters, providing the only decoration. Reds, blues and yellows are mixed everywhere. There is no traffic except a few pedicabs, while hundreds of these pedicabs with their faded red covers wait alongside the road for custom. Our cars went down these roads at a tearing speed hooting their electric horns ceaselessly.

Along the Pearl River and on the canals live thousands of families in junks. One morning I walked down the riverside road watching these families living their lives with little privacy. It was a colourful sight. There were more beautiful women and children in these little junks on the Pearl River than I have seen in all the rest of China. In their simple, tight-fitting, short blue or black dresses, combing their long, glistening black hair, their almond-skinned faces with a slight pink flush provided a sight which I cannot forget. These southern belles could have adorned any society. It was a pity that they were slowly losing their smiles and appearing grim and stern in short-cut hair and crumpled Sun Yat-sen suits.

In the heart of the city stands the ruin of an old building, an empty shell, its colonnade of pillars dominating the modern exhibition grounds. It is a reminder of a long struggle against the Japanese

and of the sufferings of the Chinese people. At another corner, across the bridge which connects the old British Concession with the city, stands another memorial, a memorial to the British massacre of the Chinese in the Opium War.

Today astride this very bridge stands the People's Liberation Army! A Chinese porter was walking on the bridge with a bundle on his head. The soldier with his gun slung across his shoulder was lazily watching the porter and as he came near pushed his gun across the path. 'Where is your card?' the soldier demanded. Quietly the poor man put down his load by the side of the road and dug into his pockets to pull out a red identity card. This was the New China.

From Canton we flew to Peking via Hankow. Our Dakota plane took eight hours to reach our destination. The airports at Canton and Hankow were in a terrible condition. The air strips were full of pot-holes and there was no place to sit down and wait. But the flight over the great Yangtse was a wonderful sight. The vast expanse of water showed the river overflowing its banks. And for miles every bit of land was cultivated. As we flew over I was reminded of the generations of hard work which the Chinese peasantry had put into the land. I had heard somewhere that the Chinese peasant considered himself to be the 'middleman' between heaven and earth. Floods and famines he took as his daily fate and yet he worked on tirelessly on the land he loved so dearly.

And so to Peking, the imperial city with its ancient wall, yellow-tiled roofs of the Manchus and beautiful palaces. Peking is a most typical Chinese town which has endured many dynasties. The jacaranda and the laburnum trees line its main wide street along the eastern wall of the Forbidden City. The Tien An Man, 'The Gate of Heavenly Peace,' appears to be a ready-made Red Square. With its imposing East Gate, red-lacquered pillars, yellow-tiled roof and red-silk ballooned Chinese lamps, it dominates the life of New China. It was in this square two years before that Mao Tse-tung had declared, from the high balcony of the Gate across the six white marbled bridges which lead the populace into the Forbidden City: 'The People's Government of China today assumes power in Peking.' I saw in this square two years later, on October 1st, 1951,

the people's might, as the Liberation Army marched by, equipped with American arms captured from the Kuomintang troops. The Parade lasted six hours and was accompanied by all the usual paraphernalia which Moscow uses; flags, huge pictures, flowers, dancers, and so on.

Edgar Snow describes Peking as a city where something had to happen. He writes in *Battle for Asia*: 'Peking was an anomaly whose days were numbered, a medieval survival where over a million men dwelt among the glitter and loot of centuries accumulated within its wonderful walls. It was a city of retired courtiers and soldiers of empire, of scholars and absentee landlords, of monks and artisan merchants, and of ricksha coolies speaking a cultured tongue; a city nobly conceived and nobly made, a treasury of art, a place of gentle birth and of decadence, of diplomatic intrigues over rapturous food, of more charm than character, and of more knavery than downright wickedness; a city of warm vivid springs and shadowed autumns, and of winter sunshine sparkling on snow-covered trees and frozen lakes, a city of eternal compromise and easy laughter, of leisure and family love, of poverty and tragedy, and indifference to dirt; and yet a place of unexpected violence, where regenerate students coined the fighting slogans of a nation, and blinding Mongolian storms swept down from the Gobi Desert, leaving the graceful temples and golden palace roofs strewn with the oldest dust of life.'

And now something had happened to Peking. The dust had been swept clean and, though the haunting beauty of the temples and the gleam of the palace roofs remained, there was no easy laughter. Arts and gentle living had disappeared, and their place was taken by grim humourless men and women in blue cotton uniforms to be moulded to one pattern of life. The scholar too had left and the *dimat* (dialectical materialism) repeating, slogan-shouting peasant had replaced him. New forbidden cities had been built within the ancient walls as the red-lacquered doors in the *huntungs* revealed the wood of ages underneath. Only the ricksha coolies had remained, sitting and smoking in their own rickshas, waiting for a customer.

Peking had become clean, hard-working and disciplined. There were no unregenerate students, only young men going through a

strict course of brain-washing and reorientation. The famous eating places too had disappeared for want of gourmets. I have never sat down to a worse meal than the State Banquet in celebration of the Republic Day. I sensed the austere living, self-sacrifice and hunger.

The corridors of the Summer Palace and the Winter Palace were filled with drably clothed peasants and district visitors come to Peking to take part in the parades. There was no swish of silk and rich brocades, but only the echo of the Yang Ko drum. The common man has come into his own, they said.

In the Park, within the walls of the Forbidden City, grow peonies. Few flowers in the world compare with their beauty and fragrance. Liberation has opened this garden to people, but while I rushed from one peony bed to another filled with ecstasy, a large crowd had collected near the monkey-cages which for some peculiar reason were placed in this beautiful garden.

The Temple of Heaven, the lakes and gardens, and the Nine Dragon Wall all gleamed in the autumn sunshine. Their ancient charm still lingered, but I saw a new character in them, a greater determination, more wickedness behind the ancient art of evasion, more contempt for those who did not agree, more intolerance.

Peking was China and all the men who were shaping her future destiny were there. But for me it was a dull round of banquets where the same speeches were repeated by the hosts and the guests. Goodwill and friendship, a two-thousand-mile-long common frontier and the two thousand years of interflow of culture between India and China, world peace and Asian unity, all came in with the usual platitudes, while we talked through our interpreters with celebrities on our right and left, and drank raw wine and harsh liquor in response to innumerable *gambes*. The Chinese mixed their wine with lemonade and cheated, but we were bored and so we did not mind drinking. If one wanted to talk seriously it was difficult to meet them singly, for they were always too busy. So, for the visitor, Peking is only a sight-seeing tour where ancient monuments are mixed up in his impressions with official handouts delivered to him in lectures with no possibility of checking them. Many of my colleagues and friends have written articles and books on China since

their return. It would be proper if they limited themselves to what they saw and omitted what was told to them by the Chinese. None of us had a single opportunity to discuss, argue or examine what was told to us.

I stayed in Peking two weeks each time I went there. I saw the Chinese opera specially performed for the visitors, heard the New music composed on the lines of the Russian revolutionary songs, and the folk dances of the Minorities. Li Mei-fang, the greatest Chinese actor, who plays the role of a woman to perfection, came out of his retirement to dazzle us with his grace and charm. The swish of the beautiful silks and the clinging folds of the Chinese draperies now remained only on the stage. It was all work, work to build a nation of heroes and model workers.

I visited universities, listened to talks on land reform and inflation, passed a day among the villagers on the outskirts of Peking, talked to some of the foreign embassies, but nothing stands out in my memory like the few hours I passed in Chi Pei-she's studio, where he painted a picture at my request. That was the only ordinary Chinese home I, or any other Indian visitor, ever visited in China. I had been to Kuo Mo-jo's home for a private interview and had had tea at Mme Sun Yat-sen's, but these calls were official and formal. The newspapers were empty and told us nothing about the life of the people next door. I therefore often felt completely alone and cut off among the million who lived in Peking. Perhaps the Communists worked on the theory that the human mind cannot for long tolerate an intellectual vacuum and so must seize the more eagerly upon those ideas they fed to it.

My two weeks in Peking in October were all planned out. There were daily visits to the 'places of interest.' We were met by some authority in charge and, after handshakes and an exchange of compliments, we were led to a room where the inevitable tea and fruits were laid out. Then the chairman or someone would get up and tell us about the institution, giving us details and statistics to show the rate of progress 'after liberation' as compared with 'before liberation.' Sometimes we would be allowed to ask questions or we would be informed that we could ask them after we had seen the place. After the round there would be tea and fruit again,

and a few questions. In the universities we seldom saw or met the students. Generally we were shown the library or some scientific or historical exhibition all arranged for the visitors.

We also had on our programme visits to the various people's organizations. Here too, after the formal courtesies, we would be told of the activities of the organizations. Thus we heard about Land Reform, Inflation, the Peace Council, the Federation of Labour. There were no discussions, only lectures and a few questions. In the evenings we had the usual banquets and speeches, or sometimes the opera or a concert or a cinema show, all in the hotel unless it was at the State banqueting hall. We had very little time to ourselves, but I often escaped the routine and called on various other foreigners resident in China.

I eagerly looked forward to these visits, as it was through them that I heard something of what was daily happening in China. I knew the Indian Ambassador and many other embassy officials. Through them I met Mr Lamb, the British Chargé d'Affaires, M Rezzonico, the Swiss Minister, Mr Mahdi, the Indonesian Chargé, and many others. They talked as diplomats, but I could learn a lot from them about the achievements of New China. The few evenings I spent with them then brought back reality and restored my objectivity. I constantly dreaded the oppressive atmosphere which sought to imprison man's mind. Free company or drink were the only means to escape the tyranny of repetition. I now know at first hand the world of Orwell's '1984.'

When I returned to China in May, I was independent. My first week in Peking, while waiting for my credentials, was spent reading, and curio dealers came to me with many treasures, knowing I was interested in them. I whiled away my days with the beauties of Old China.

When my permit came I began to go around with the Indian Delegation retracing the ground I had trodden before. I do not think that I would have been allowed to travel alone. Besides, it is difficult to obtain transport other than pedicabs. But the evenings were my own and I met all my old acquaintances who talked to me more freely, for they now knew that I believed in Freedom.

M Rezzonico was a constant delight. He describes himself as

being descended from Casanova on one side and from one of the Popes on the other. He keeps a beautiful house and talks extremely cleverly. He and Pannikar met at lunch twice a week regularly, for whatever their differences of opinions, there is very little other company possible. The Swiss Minister has a difficult task, for he looks after the Roman Catholic Missions, which have gone through much during the last thirty months. Mr Lamb the British Chargé d'Affaires and Mr Gillette, his aide, with their wives formed a solitary quartette. They were old China hands and knew much about China's old problems though now they were completely cut off. The beautiful grounds of the British Embassy was their little prison.

Peking was grim, sullen and silent, but in it live all the men who matter. They may alter the destiny of Asia and even to catch a fleeting glimpse or to hear a few words from them may throw a revealing light on the sword which hangs over us all. We cannot know them well but we can ignore them only at our peril.

PART ONE

3

MAO TSE-TUNG

During our stay in Peking I read and heard of the new myth into which Mao was being transformed. He was the saving Star, the man of wisdom who led the Communists to success, the Father, and many things besides. Maoism was fast becoming a new religion and, as such, unassailable and incontrovertible. Mao had once talked to newspapermen with obvious delight and enjoyed their company. He had freely mixed with the peasants and the workers and known their feelings at first hand. He had received hundreds of people in his humble abode in Yenan and answered thousands of letters personally. But today, with the Kingdom come, nobody knows whether he lives in the Forbidden City or in a temple in the Western Hills. He no more mixes with people; much less has he any time to meet or write to the peasants and workers who send him all their problems. He seldom attends any public function except May Day and October 1st parades and State receptions for these occasions. Even then his going and coming is announced only a few minutes before. Mao is being built up into a mystery and a new god.

Everywhere one went, in homes and offices, on the streets and railway stations, there was the portrait of Mao with his head uplifted, youthful and smiling. He was the new awakening, the all-knowing Buddha, the Saviour. Mao had said: 'The people must rule. There is no rule without the people.' But now there were no people, only the Leader. He had given his teachings in the *Thoughts of Mao*, and his doctrine was the development of Marx, Engels and Lenin. How could I, a mere mortal, seek to be ushered into his presence, and that too for the purpose of questioning him? It was enough that I had seen him twice.

It was on September 30th at the State Banquet that I stood in

front of him a few feet away, drinking a toast to New China while he murmured a few words welcoming the Indian Delegation. Robert Payne has described him as thick and muscular shouldered with a leonine head, blue-black hair, a long sloping forehead, pursed-up lips and large eyes. When I saw him in the midst of a formal banquet, surrounded by Chu Teh, Chou En-lai and others, he seemed to me, in his loose blue serge Sun Yat-sen suit with its trousers resembling wide Oxford bags, heavier than in the photographs. He looked a benign father welcoming his children to the festive occasion with a gentle smile. His rather large eyes saw straight into the visitor's face. He shook hands firmly and warmly with hands which were small and podgy. Formal toasts over, he lumbered around from table to table returning the earlier toasts, shaking hands all over again. The State banqueting hall was filled with seventeen hundred peasant and labour heroes who were thrilled to the core at beholding their Saviour in their midst, freely mixing with them for a passing moment. They had been privileged to come from all over the country to join in the October 1st celebrations. As Mao went round the hall, the crowd began to sing :

'Tung fang hung t'ai-yang sheng
Chung-kuo Chiu-lai i-go Mao Tse-tung.
The sun is rising red in the East
China has brought forth a Mao Tse-tung.
He labours for the welfare of the people.
Aiyayo, he is the people's great saviour.
Mao Tse-tung wan shui! Mao Tse-tung wan shui! May Mao Tse-tung live ten thousand years!'

I saw him again the next day taking the salute in the Tien An Man square. He stood on the podium surrounded by the members of his Politburo. The thin line of the hierarchy extended along the rostrum while Mao stood immobile and watchful. Stalky Chu Teh, with his weather-beaten face, which had seen many battles, was leading the parade in a jeep. He was followed by China's armed might.

Mao was again in his blue suit with a peaked cap. Just below hung a huge portrait of him with the head uplifted towards the rising sun. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. he stood there, occasionally lift-

ing his hand in a benedictory salute which looked almost like that of the high priest blessing the worshippers, while thousands of voices shouted 'Mao Tse-tung wan shui!' below in the square. His rustic peasant face sometimes lighted up with a smile which crinkled up his eyes into slits. Mao filled the vast square and gripped the minds and hearts of the people in a firm, determined hand. His word was not only law but wisdom and truth rolled into one. To disagree was to blaspheme, at least in the eyes of his followers.

Mao is fifty-nine today, and long and arduous life in Yenan has told on his health. Though he still retains his youthful looks and a crop of dark black hair makes him look younger than he is, it is said that he cannot stand the strain of standing for hours on end for these parades. The May Day parade was therefore cut down to a mere three hours instead of the usual six hours. His private life is known to few, for he is the new mystery.

I was to come across his powerful influence on the life of the people in far-off places. In Kao Kang, the north-east village, women rushed to shake our hands because they heard that we had shaken hands with Mao. Peasants talked about letters they had addressed to him pouring out their troubles to him, and the replies they had received. Children from the day they were able to talk were taught the song 'Tung fang hung.'

I did not see Mao again, but I was in Peking when the Indian Cultural Delegation went to see him. Mrs Pandit, the leader of the Delegation, had gone ahead and after a few minutes the rest of the Delegation had been ushered into his presence. Mrs Pandit had a little conversation with him while they drank toasts in champagne to China and India. As he shook hands with the Delegates someone among the Delegates, I am told, muttered that they were happy to be in China. Mao is reported to have replied, 'Let us work together for peace. Let us work together for construction.' Some people describe this as Mao's Asian sense. I do not know what this is supposed to convey, but Mao regards Asia as China's sphere of influence.

I do not think that there was much love lost between Stalin and Mao. Soviet Russia had ignored him, and all through China's

struggle and even at the end of the war did not expect the Chinese Communists to complete the conquest of Chiang so soon. Ever since 1927 Mao had found himself in opposition to the Comintern and Stalin, who had advocated only a limited seizure of lands and armed proletarian uprisings in the cities to capture power. After the departure of Borodin and Roy, this policy was represented by Li Li-san, who was a Moscow-trained romantic. Mao, who had never left his country till he went to Moscow in 1950, drew his strength from his peasant origin. He knew the hunger of the peasantry for land and realized that the Communists could continue their resistance only with the help of the peasant. 'The war of resistance,' he wrote much later, 'is really a peasants' war.'

Mao has analysed his theory of the Chinese Revolution in 1939 in *The Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party of China*:

'Faced with such enemies, questions arise concerning the special revolutionary bases. The great imperialist powers and their reactionary allied armies in China have always indefinitely occupied important Chinese cities. If the revolutionary force is to accumulate and nurture its own strength and avoid fighting decisive battles with powerful enemies when its own strength is not yet ascertained, then it must turn the backward remote areas into progressive, strong bases, making them great military, political, economic and cultural revolutionary strongholds. Then, from these strongholds, the revolutionary force can start to drive out those malicious enemies who are based upon the cities and who encroach upon the villages. Also, from these strongholds the revolutionary force, may, through prolonged struggle, gradually achieve total success. Under such conditions, and because of the unbalanced nature of Chinese economic development (the rural economy is not entirely dependent upon the urban economy), and because of the vastness of China's territory (there are immense spaces for the revolutionary forces to fall back on), and because of the disunity and conflict existing within the anti-revolutionary camp, and because the main force of the Chinese revolution, which is the Chinese peasantry, is under the leadership of the Communist Party, so there arises the great possibility that the Chinese revolution will succeed first and

foremost in the countryside. Thus the revolution is driven to its conclusion within a totally unbalanced atmosphere, which increases our difficulties and causes the prolongation of the revolution.'

This was a vital difference of approach to the whole concept of revolution. The Comintern would have nothing to do with such heresy and the Chinese were left unaided to work out their own destiny. The Chinese Communists learnt the correctness of Mao's analysis through five bitter campaigns launched by Chiang to annihilate them. In the apostolic hierarchy today the doctrine of Chinese Communism is handed down from Marx, Engels and Lenin direct to Mao. Stalinism represents the Western Branch, while Maoism carries the Eastern. Stalin and Mao were allies mutually suspicious of each other, but Russia and Communist China, now completely cut off from the Western Powers, are more and more dependent upon Stalin for all military, technical, and economic help. Mao sees in friendship with India a possible counterbalance to the Russian domination. It is this fact perhaps which leads China to seek better relations with India.

Mao's attitude to India in recent years shows the change through which his personality is emerging. In the past he had repeatedly asserted that 'without the assistance of Soviet Russia, final victory in China is impossible.' At the Third Session of the First National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference he had again pledged: 'In the international field, we have relied on the firm unity within the camp of peace and democracy headed by the Soviet Union and on the profound goodwill of the peoples throughout the world.' But three years of experience with Soviet Russian alliance had also taught him to fear the domination of Russia on what is now his domain. It was therefore that in October, 1951, word was sent round that China must cultivate the people of India, and for the first time the list of slogans for the October Parade included 'Long live the unity of the Asian people.' The Indian visitors to China were fussed over and toasted as representatives of the people of India, while complete silence was maintained over the Government and the Prime Minister of India.

What did this change signify? Edgar Snow had written of Mao: 'Although Mao is unquestionably the outstanding personality of the Communists, he is in no sense a dictator. Mao's influence is exercised mainly through his position in the party Politburo and on the military committee. He holds no official posts.' But Mao is today the Chairman of the Central People's Government and People's Revolutionary Military Council, and as such wields unlimited power. Success has made him a dictator whose will is law. Mao had been moved by the desire for power in the past, but then he remained a peasant bound to the fortunes of his party. Today he is the Saving Star and the untrammelled power he wields can only be furthered by alliance with Asian powers and not by obeisance to the Soviet Union.

Mao exercises powers such as no Chinese in the past has ever had. Is he succumbing to his own myth? History alone can tell, but the fate of millions of China and Asia depend upon him.

PART ONE

4

THE NEW IMPERIALISM

Mao's policy of a United Asia is a new development which can be explained by an examination of recent history.

China leans heavily on Soviet Russia to consolidate her power. Ideological interests and economic dependence firmly bind her to the Communist block. New China faces tremendous problems of political and economic reconstruction. She needs efficient administrative machinery to administer a vast country and to secure a Communist dictatorship over the lives of a people used to individualistic ways of life, to tolerance and understanding. At the end of the war her industrial and financial resources were in chaos and poverty and hunger stalked the land. Foreign exploitation, occupation and ambitious war lords had left the country open to invasion and reoccupation. The Chinese Communists needed time and help to unify the country and improve the life of the people.

Unfortunately at this critical moment the confused and bungling policy of the United States left much bitterness and anger. The United States, the UNRRA and even the UN became suspects that sought to re-establish disorder and corruption. For Mao there was no other alternative but to seek the help of the Soviet Union. This was a new alliance. As late as 1945 the Russians had relied on Chiang to provide a unified and stable China. Mao had followed his own 'star' and led an agrarian revolution as a prelude to the war of liberation. For twenty-three years he had suffered in the wilderness and carried on his own war of resistance, denied any assistance by the Russians. The Comintern had called Mao an 'opportunist' and left him to build his 'romantic Soviet republics in the mountainous wilderness' instead of leading a proletarian mass movement. And he had not merely fought many battles but

had given the Chinese Communists their own theory of revolution. But now Mao needed Russian aid.

What had happened to change his views? The American attempts to unify China and bring about a coalition government had failed mainly because the United States continued the military assistance to Chiang's forces. This aid had been utilized by Chiang to annihilate the Communists. In July the task of unifying the country was still unfinished, for the Kuomintang forces held out in the South. Late in November, 1948, Mao declared: 'The particular task of the Communists is to unite all revolutionary forces within the whole country, to drive out American imperialism, overthrow the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang and establish a unified democratic people's republic in alliance with the Soviet Union.'

The revolution of the wheel was complete. The initial task having been achieved, Mao turned to Soviet Russia for help. He knew that he was beset with overwhelming problems which he could not tackle unless he could assure internal security and face with equanimity any attempts of Chiang to return. In December, 1949, he went to Moscow for the first time and, after weeks of bitter wrangling, brought back the Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance. Economic aid was given under a separate agreement which gave a loan of a mere 300 million U.S. dollars spread over five years. The announcement of the treaty had immediate effects both politically and economically within the country, for it made a foreign invasion possible only at the risk of a world war.

The alliance is between two unequal partners, for, though China has resources and a vast man-power, she is today completely dependent upon Russian military and technical aid. Mao knows this, and as a realist he also knows his limitations. He needs military equipment to keep his army a modern fighting machine. Russia, too, is interested in maintaining a strong army to guard the eastern frontiers and engage the enemy on a double front along the vast geopolitical mass. So we find today a well trained and Russian-equipped air force in China.

China needed industrialization to relieve the pressure of over-population on the land. Her existing industries had to be restarted

and heavy industries established. Soviet Russia, however, could spare little in capital goods or technical assistance. There are, of course, many Russian technicians and advisers, but their number is inadequate. Nevertheless Russian influence is noticeable all over the country. In the North, in Manchuria, Mao's portrait is inevitably flanked by Stalin's as a constant reminder of the occupation. Signboards on the railway stations, hotels and theatres are invariably in both languages. In the South, however, the influence is less marked. The portraits here range from Marx to Stalin as reminders of the long road of the Communist faith.

In the Mukden hotel hung a full-length picture of Stalin and Mao walking down a many-pillared corridor of the Kremlin. The artist had taken care to depict the Chinese leader as taller than Stalin, which amused me, as I have seen similar Russian pictures in which the heights are reversed. Each nation likes to think of itself as the 'big brother.'

In the colleges and schools Russian has replaced English and the book shops were filled with Russian books, magazines and pamphlets. It was difficult to obtain any English books. Liu Shao-chi, the party dialectician, is busy explaining Maoism in terms of Stalinism and vice versa, and the history of revolution is perverted to show the valuable advice and aid given to China by Stalin. In the process there is much talk of the leadership of the proletariat and the need to further it.

Mao is conscious of China's growing dependence and the increasing influence of Soviet Power. He has, however, no alternative, for the Western Powers have thrown him into the arms of the Russian bear. Around him he sees Liu Shao-chi, Peng Chen and Kao Kang who incline strongly towards the left and insist on the sovietization of China. Among the cadres and the schools and colleges a new generation is arising which is trained in Russian methods and under Russian influence. In any conflict for power within the country the Russian influence and goodwill will play a decisive part. But as long as the Mao – Chu Teh combination lasts nothing can happen against Mao's will.

Speaking to the Indian Ambassador, Mao, it is reported, recalled his visit to an aeroplane plant while in Moscow. 'Not until your

country and mine can do this for ourselves,' he remarked, 'can we act decisively. Until then we must move slowly.' So Mao moves slowly but certainly. Mao will, however, never be a Tito, for history and ideological identity now hold him to an understanding with Soviet Russia. Yet Mao is also seeking an understanding with the Asian countries, especially India. The Russians are still 'foreign devils,' often called the 'big noses' by the common man in China.

On October 1st, 1951, for the first time Mao proclaimed the slogan of Asian unity. At the celebrations which followed, India was given precedence over all other missions, including the Eastern European delegations, except for the Soviet delegation. Welcoming the new Indian Ambassador in September, 1952, Mao repeated, 'I am convinced that the friendly co-operation between the peoples of our two countries will be promoted and consolidated more and more in the common cause for striving for peace in Asia and in the whole world.' Mao's call has been picked up by the people, who showered warmth and affection on us during both my visits. It was a warning and a hint to Soviet Russia that China can effectively carry with her the millions of Asians who have also suffered at the hands of the Western Powers. The last two years have clearly shown that Chinese Communism has succeeded in Asia where the Russian failed.

When I met Kuo Mo-jo I wanted him to say something about Mao's 'Asian Sense.' I am convinced that the talk of Asian Unity and Asian Peace is an attempt to achieve regional collective security as against both East and West. It is Mao's plan to bring about China's equality with the Soviet Union and to enforce her 'peace' on the West. Kuo Mo-jo replied: 'We seek Asian Unity to promote the betterment of the backward peoples and the right of independence and self-determination of the Asian countries. We are not calling for a new Monroe Doctrine for Asia, for we are seeking only the right of self-determination for the Asian peoples. We do not want Asia for ourselves. We do not reject Western culture. Thus Asian unity is a step towards world unity.'

I pressed Kuo Mo-jo to tell me how Asian unity could lead to world unity and peace unless the Asian powers seek to be a 'third force' holding the balance between the East and the West. Would

not a genuine United Nations be a better guarantee of peace, I urged. 'Asian unity will safeguard peace' Kuo Mo-jo replied. 'There are only two forces in the world – forces of peace and forces of war. There is no "third force." Asian unity will increase the forces of peace. Even the Western Powers are not all imperialists. A majority of people in the West also love peace. We therefore lean to the side of peace. If you do not lean to one side, peace is difficult and improbable. The conflict is getting sharper and the only hope of peace is to strengthen the side of peace. There is no middle way. Asian unity is therefore a step in the direction of world peace and world unity.'

I recalled what Mao had said in 1949. He had then written: 'You incline to one side. That is right. The forty years' experience of Sun Yat-sen and the twenty-eight years' experience of the Chinese Communist Party have convinced us that in order to attain victory and consolidate it we must incline to one side. According to these experiences, the Chinese people must incline either toward the side of imperialism or toward the side of Socialism. There can be no exception to this rule. It is impossible to sit on the fence; there is no third road. Neutrality is merely a camouflage; a third road does not exist.'

Mao the realist had been too dogmatic then. The world was either black or white, there were no half-tones. But Mao himself had described dogmas as 'more useless than cow-dung, for cow-dung can be used as a fertilizer.' Now he was changing. He was talking of Asian unity with nations whom he had once called 'running dogs of imperialism.' The Soviet alliance had taught him all too soon, it appears, where he stood and he was beginning to shed his dogmatism.

Perhaps it was the Korean war which was giving him a new outlook on foreign relations. It is true that Korea and Indo-China have been historically considered by the Chinese as their spheres of influence. Korea was the traditional door to the conquest of China. Indo-China is part of the Chinese rice-bowl and has supplied rice to South China. China wants friendly powers in these countries. Yet war-weary China would have hesitated to enter upon a venture which must affect her already exhausted economy unless

she had had hopes of an early successful termination based on promises of military and economic aid. I saw ample evidence of exhaustion and bitter frustration since the promises have not come up to expectation.

In the beginning, the war helped to reorganize the army and train it in modern warfare. Under the stress of war, industry was reorganized and the initiative of the people released. China was able to impose heavy sacrifices on the people in the name of national defence, and the people submitted to compulsory contributions, liquidation of all who disagreed with the Government and austerity living. They accepted high prices and hard work, and 'the evil of war was turned into good'; but there is a limit to such endurance.

There are now murmurs of criticism and of anxiety to return to peacetime reconstruction. I had repeatedly asked why the South Koreans should have invaded the North, since according to the Chinese the people were not behind Rhee. Ultimately one of the high-up Communists said, 'The North Koreans could have easily dealt with the hirelings of Rhee without going into a large-scale war, but they were impatient.' The Pan Mun Jon negotiations were reported in the Press with increasing bitterness. The charges of bacteriological warfare were necessary, I felt, to revive the drooping spirits of the people. They were the usual atrocity stories to rouse the people to yet greater sacrifices.

China's anxiety to end the war in Korea is genuine, but she cannot afford to lose face with her people. For too long have the people suffered in the name of national honour and unity. The stalemate in Korea had been described to them as victory in which the Chinese people have matched their blood against steel. An old story of the hunter and the tiger was repeatedly told. The hunter (United States) has placed his hand in the mouth of the tiger (China), now the tiger can let go the hand only at its own risk. But unfortunately the tiger cannot swallow the hunter. So the cry for Asian unity is not only a cry to readjust the balance between the parties to the Sino-Soviet alliance, but also a cry for help to save her face in Korea.

The Communist Mao now talks of co-existence with capitalists and their 'running dogs.' Chou repeated it to me: 'We believe that

all countries in the world, whether they are socialists, people's democracies or capitalists, can co-exist peacefully.' But peaceful co-existence, according to Communist China is only possible when Asian unity has strengthened the hands of Mao and compelled the submission of the world to the Sino-Soviet supremacy. *People's China*, after stressing Asian unity, wrote on May 1st: 'If the capitalist countries unleash a war, they are then bound to lose. On the other hand the camp of peace and democracy and the peace-loving peoples throughout the world are opposed to aggression. It therefore follows as a matter of course that peaceful co-existence of different social systems is possible.'

Towards this end China hopes to use the ten million Chinese resident all over South-east Asia. These Chinese must remain the nationals of China, for they will not be allowed to accept any other nationality. Chou En-lai had slipped when in answering Tabrani he had said that China was prepared to negotiate the question of nationality with other Asian countries, but the slip was corrected later. I am convinced that the Chinese residents in Indonesia, Indo-China, Thailand, Malaya, Burma and India will never be given up, though these Chinese have lived for generations in the land of their adoption. Early in 1952 a group of Indonesian Chinese students arrived in China with the passports of their country. China confiscated these passports and insisted that they must carry Chinese passports. The Indonesian Chargé made many protests, but to no avail.

In the People's Political Consultative Council, the overseas Chinese have 16 members according to the Organic Law of China. It is thus made clear that China has no intention to give up her claim on the allegiance of the Chinese who have lived outside China for generations. In Calcutta, where about 10,000 Chinese live, all the techniques of Communist infiltration, of indoctrination coupled with compulsion by threats of the direst consequences, are being used to reduce them to submission. A Chinese school teacher was driven to commit suicide because of threats to his wife and mother-in-law.

China thus seeks to utilize her nationals to 'liberate' South-east Asia from foreign imperialism and to build an Asian unity. The

frustrated nationalism and the economic poverty of the people become useful instruments to further her designs. In Indo-China, it is Họ Chin-minh who carries on a bitter struggle with the help of the Chinese, though China will not openly intervene. In Thailand, the corruptions of the politician and the opposite pulls of British and American diplomacy have left the country an easy prey. Meanwhile, Pridi, the only popular Thai leader, bides his time in Shanghai. And so it will go on, unless the Asian nations realize that a new imperialism is seeking to fasten upon them.

Chinese relations with India are a key factor in any developments in South-east Asia, for in all these countries India, with the important economic interests and political influence of her overseas Indians, is the only counterbalancing factor. In significant contrast to the Chinese, the Indian residents have been advised to accept the nationality of the country of their adoption. China, while outwardly she pays tributes to 'two-thousand-year-old friendship and interflow of culture,' has little consideration for the Government of India or for Indian interests.

India, according to the Chinese Communists, is not an independent country. The controlled Chinese Press writes disparagingly about Indian elections and Nehru. One paper wrote: 'Despite "independence" and "free elections," the British, and more and more the Americans, have been extending their control over the Indian economy.' India was labelled the 'running dog of imperialism' when she supported the UN resolution calling North Korea the aggressor. Mrs Pandit, I understand, was repeatedly asked by such men as Kao Kang, Chen Yi, the mayor of Shanghai, and others about British interference in India and the influence of Commonwealth ties on India foreign policy. There were open hints that India was still to be 'liberated.'

I found a marked difference between the treatment of the two delegations which I accompanied. The first was a people's delegation. Both met with the same red carpet, but its welcome was warmer and more popular. The Government of India's Delegation was met with cold formality. There were no popular rallies to welcome them. The information given to them was limited and they were more 'conducted' than the previous delegation.

In Tibet, China and India came into conflict for the first time. Tibet, though racially one with the Chinese, has been politically independent. It has always been within the Chinese sphere of influence and a Chinese protectorate. But the ties with China were loose, for China was too weak to exercise any dominating influence. It was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that both the British in India and Russia sought to interfere in the affairs of the country. Tibet is by religion, by language and by culture more Indian than Chinese. It was to Indian interests that Tibet should maintain her internal independence, but China was determined to occupy her. After assuring the Indian Ambassador, Mr Pannikar, that China had only peaceful intentions in Tibet, China forcibly occupied the country. Today, India and her neighbours Nepal and Bhutan face the consequences in Communist infiltration in their affairs.

Along the 2,000-mile-long frontier between China and India, stands a powerful army, not perhaps to attack, because aggression is not possible, but certainly to influence and to promote the 'liberation' of India. Mao needs India not only to strengthen his hand politically but also as an economic asset to supplement the meagre assistance he receives from his alliance. Official China is therefore friendly to India, but she will give all assistance to the Indian people's 'liberation.'

So while Mao develops his 'Asian Sense,' Russia stands firm on the Chinese soil, sparing in her aid, friendly but unobtrusive and courteous but firm. She needs China's vast potential manpower and resources for the coming struggle, and she is content to wait. Meanwhile she will do nothing to irritate China.

A colleague of mine said to Chang, our interpreter, 'You regard India as semi-colonial. You think we are still under the British influence. Well, we think you are greatly under the influence of Russia.' Chang reacted violently. 'Yes, we are dependent on Russia for technical advice and aid. We have not concealed the fact. But have you ever seen a Russian order about a Chinese?'

No; I had not seen a Russian ordering a Chinese about. He does not need to. He has found tools to do it for him.

PART ONE

5

CHOU EN-LAI

I am more interested in people and what happens to them than in visiting palaces. In China nothing ever happened to the people, at least as far as the visitor was concerned. They were all working to make the new democracy a success. Everything was according to schedule, plans were carried out ahead of time, targets were surpassed and the people's heroes were daily breaking records by contributing hundreds of 'inventions.' The newspapers contained nothing except reports of the cordial atmosphere in which various receptions were held and the speeches of the ministers delivered at such receptions. The Korean truce negotiations followed the same pattern of monotonous repetition. The world beyond was shut out and even the people living in this very city were all living behind closed doors. If I wanted to see only what was pointed out I need not have come all the way to China.

I was there in China hoping to see and listen to live people and not just to marionettes. I wanted to go back stage, talk to the people and feel their reaction. Here was Peking bristling with men who had changed the course of history and may affect the future of the millions of Asia, and I could not even ask them a question: I was bored and frustrated. I went to our chief interpreter and told her again and again that I wanted to interview Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Liu Shao-chi and others, and I always got the same reply: 'Your request has been forwarded.' Eventually I put my request to the officer in charge of all visiting delegations, stressing the importance for China of proper representation in India. Perhaps the urgency of my request did have some effect. He asked me to put down my questions in writing which he offered to send to the Foreign Office. He could not say more.

My stay in Peking was nearing its end and I was frankly disappointed at having had no interview with any Communist leader, or any answers to my questions, when one day Madame Liu, the chief interpreter, knowing my irritation at receiving no reply, called on me and told me that New China does not believe in Press interviews. She hoped, however, that I might still be able to meet the Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, at a reception or so. I told her that such meetings in big gatherings have little use for the Press. If he could not give me the interview on the basis of my questions, I suggested, he might call a Press Conference where we could question him. But my request was again left in the air.

Two or three days before our departure, the Indian Counsellor had invited the members of the Goodwill Delegation to an informal dinner at his house. That afternoon we were suddenly informed that we should be back from the dinner by 9 p.m., as the Foreign Office was holding a reception in honour of all the delegations then in Peking. It was hinted to me that at the reception I would have the opportunity to meet the Premier. I was not much excited about the prospects of the evening, but took the precaution of taking a copy of the questions that I had sent to the Foreign Office with me.

We drove up to the State Reception punctually at 9.30 p.m. All the delegations, including Eastern European, Russian, Indonesian, Burmese, Pakistani and Indian, were there. We mechanically shook hands and moved on to the corner of the sitting-room, waiting for the usual speeches which had been repeated at every banquet we had attended. After a few minutes Madame Liu came along accompanying the Premier, and introduced us to him.

It was indeed a surprise to us all when we realized that it was the Prime Minister who had received us at the door. This was indeed a change from the imperial protocol of New Delhi. We were then asked to move into the dining-hall and take our seats anywhere we liked. As I passed the head of the table, I saw my original handwritten questions lying on the table, where I expected the Prime Minister to take his seat. I was surprised and worried as to how I was to ask all those questions in the midst of two hundred people, many of whom were likely to be little interested. But I was deter-

mined to snatch every opportunity, even if others felt I was depriving them of their chance.

It was a very business-like session. Chou En-lai got up and addressed the guests. He welcomed us to China and hoped that we had been able to see everything we wanted. Naturally there were many shortcomings, he continued, but New China was only two years old. There might be many things which the visitors would like to know from him and he was prepared, he added, to answer all such questions. It was a short speech which lasted only five minutes. It was translated to us in English and Russian. Immediately the translations were finished, Chou En-lai waited for a minute as if awaiting questions from us; then he turned towards me, apparently expecting me to get up and put my questions.

This was the first time that I had seen Chou at close quarters. Like India's Nehru, he is a very handsome man. His suit was perfectly tailored and his conscious elegance, coupled with mandarin grace and charm, must impress the ordinary simple country people with his unassuming superiority. His well modulated voice, cultured gestures, boyish infectious laughter and twinkling eyes, in fact everything about him, grip the onlooker with the spell of his charm. He knows the world and speaks French and German fluently. He was a student in France when, together with Li Li-san and Lo Man, he founded the Chinese Communist Party in France. He represented Yenan at Chungking in the days of co-operation with Kuomintang. It is said that Chiang Kai-shek considered Chou as the only Communist with whom it was possible to talk.

Chou has very little to do with the Party machine, though he is a member of the Central Committee. He maintains his position by his personal popularity. It is not unusual in the East to find men wielding great influence over the people by means of their good looks, charm, and aristocratic aloofness, apart from their integrity and intellectual capacity. In India there were Nehru and Jinnah, both of whom owed their popularity as much to their social position and personal charm as to their intellectual understanding. In the midst of the all-pervading misery and ugliness such men give hope of some beauty to look up to.

I had sent some sixteen questions which I had worked out step by

step so that the answers could be complete, without evasions of any important point. But in the midst of so many people it was impossible to follow them. Apart from about one hundred and fifty delegates from various countries, there were present Vice-Premier Tung Pi-wu and Kuo Mo-jo, Secretary-General of the Central People's Government Lin Po-chu, and the Vice Foreign Minister Wang Chia-hsiang. I felt I could not ask about the Korean war and the prospects of truce negotiations, as this might have been considered as insulting to our hosts.

I began by asking Chou his permission to put certain questions to him as, I explained, there were considerable misunderstandings in the world. We in India had heard a lot about peace, while in fact the world was living in a state of conflict. Would the Premier, I asked, explain the Chinese concept of peace? Would he explain how it was possible for conflicting ideologies to co-exist in the world?

I broke the silence which had descended upon the hall when Chou had finished his short address. There were hostile glances from all around as my question implied disbelief in the Communist front of Peace Conference and Peace Pacts. After all, I was in the midst of people soaked in Communist jargon. But Chou En-lai smiled at me. I saw he had followed my English, but he waited for the translations into Chinese and Russian to finish. He replied: 'You have raised an excellent question. Peace has become a focal problem in the world today. The Chinese people are peace-loving. The principle of the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China is protection of the independence, freedom, integrity of territory and sovereignty of the country, the upholding of lasting international peace and friendly co-operation between people of all countries, and opposition to the imperialist policy of aggression and war. Chairman Mao Tse-tung declared to the world on the day when the Central People's Government was established that the Government of the People's Republic of China is willing to establish diplomatic relations with any foreign government which is willing to adhere to the principle of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty. We believe that all countries in the world, whether they are socialists, people's democracies, or capitalists, can

co-exist peacefully. But the imperialist countries are not willing to have peaceful co-existence and they are afraid of peaceful competition. These imperialist countries are unwilling to discard their aggressive policy of expansion abroad and their war policy. We must then oppose them. We believe that a lasting world peace is in the interest of the peoples of the world and therefore can be achieved, and that the war policy of the imperialists can certainly be defeated. That is to say, if the people of the world fight for peace, a lasting peace will certainly triumph over aggressive wars.'

This speech was translated to us by Chou En-lai's Harvard-returned secretary Pu Shou-chang. Pu appears to be a constant companion to Chou, for he went with him everywhere when I saw him again in May, 1952. He speaks excellent English and was a student of economics at Harvard. He is one of those who returned to China after the 'liberation' and appears to have accepted Communism to serve his country. From what I saw of him, I am sure that he was used to a much better life in the old days, but he has accepted cheerfully the many hardships which life in Communist China today involves. Pu, like many other young men and women I have met, was a constant reminder to me that many have found spiritual satisfaction in the prospects of serving their country under the present regime. Pu shares many of Chou's characteristics and I can well imagine the loyalty of the younger one for his superior.

Though I had expected this answer, I had hoped that Chou would do more than repeat the usual Communist jargon about imperialism and the peace-loving peoples of the Communist world. I wanted to know what was their basic concept of peace and whether such concept conceded the possibility of people of different ways of life living together. I had hoped that Chou, in the long tradition of the Chinese people, who had cultivated the art of living and peaceful co-existence, would say something which would carry with it the ancient wisdom of Confucius and Buddha. But perhaps it was a vain hope.

I had asked the same question of Pablo Neruda a few months before, when he came to India to attend the Peace Conference at New Delhi which was banned by the Government of India. Neruda is a poet and I could feel the intensity of his desire for

peace. But peace does not lie in the Stockholm Pact or in the aggressiveness of the fanatic. I had then told him that my wife and I would gladly attend a conference which genuinely sought peace, but peace in the Communist terminology only meant exploitation of the people's hunger and their enslavement in the name of defence against aggression.

I saw an example of the Communist 'love of peace' on May Day in Peking. While the people in the Tien An Man square were releasing the white doves of peace to alight on the shoulders of Mao, the *People's Daily* wrote a front-page editorial declaring that the only guarantee of peace was the Chinese people's preparedness to strike against war provocateurs.

The same argument – the necessity of preparedness for war and of overwhelming strength – is used by the Western Powers entering this mad race to arm the world to the teeth for the sake of peace. Even the tragic murder of more than three million human beings in Korea is claimed as a step towards saving the peace. But I must revert to the banquet and Chou. His answer to my question left so much unsaid that I wondered how to frame my next question so as to pin him down to the point. Meanwhile the interpreter had moved away to another colleague who wanted to suggest that China should call an Asian Relations Conference to develop friendship among the Asian nations. His question gave me the opportunity to ask whether the unity of Asian peoples could strengthen peace and protect them against aggression. Would not such unity be interpreted as a creation of a regional block and as such considered a threat to peace? When I put this question, I had in mind the new slogan of Asian unity announced on the October 1st parade, and the implications of such unity in the Communist strategy. The Premier replied:

'We believe that if the people of China, India, Burma, Indonesia, Pakistan, and all other Asian peoples, including the Japanese people, strengthen their unity and fight for peace, they will surely be able to resist American aggression and aggression from other imperialist countries. We believe that such strengthening of unity among the Asian peoples for peace will certainly contribute to the unity of the people of the world and by no means be a hindrance to

it. Since we call for unity among Asian peoples for the purposes of safeguarding the world peace and opposing aggressive wars, it therefore cannot possibly constitute a threat to world peace. Those who say that the unity among the Asian peoples is a threat to peace are precisely the American and other imperialists who are threatening the peace in Asia by building military bases in Asia, rearming Japan and attempting to extend their aggressive war.' Unity according to Communist concept is unity against the West and 'Peace' is Communist peace. Even the new nations of Asia are not recognized as free Governments, and the appeal is made to the peoples of these countries. The omission of Indo-China, Thailand and Malaya was significant.

Another delegate now rose to his feet. Instead of asking a question, he delivered a speech on the multi-class structure of Chinese society and the multi-party State under the leadership of the working class. He concluded by asking how long it would take to transform the People's Democratic State into a Socialist State, and what was the economic programme concerning finance, trade, technical personnel and population. Chou denied that Chinese economy was a mixed economy and said: 'The future of China's economic development will be State ownership of industry and socialization of agriculture. This, however, will take a very long time, and it will be with the consideration and consent of the Chinese people that we shall enter into socialism properly and with sure steps.'

Chou's answer gave me the opportunity of asking him whether, in view of her unbalanced economy, China would welcome foreign assistance and technical know-how. Chou replied: 'In the process of industrializing our country there are difficulties. But we are confident that we will be able to overcome them mainly with our own strength. Of course,' he added, 'we welcome very much any assistance from friendly countries and from the people of the world who are sympathetic toward our cause.

'So far as equipment and technical know-how are concerned, we have received great assistance from the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Eastern Europe. South-east Asia has also helped us through the exchange of raw materials during the last two years.

For example, we learnt railway administration from the Soviet Union.' Reverting to the population problem, Chou gave the usual Marxist reply. Kuo Mo-jo, a writer turned economist for the occasion, had declared in 1949: 'The food problem in China is not due to over-population but to excessive economic exploitation by foreign capitalism acting in connivance with subversive elements in China. The Chinese people have now turned the tables on their exploiters and in the near future there will be no food problem in China even if there is an increase in population.' Chou said on this occasion, 'We have a vast area and much uncultivated lands. Our river valley and irrigation projects will need much labour. Population problem therefore does not exist.' Cheap labour is the only capital in an underdeveloped country and the Marxian doctrine advanced here was seeking capital only, and not the betterment of the standard of living of the people.

I had been waiting for an opportunity to ask Chou questions on the Korean war and the truce negotiations. The period of the truce was nearly over and to refrain from asking these questions would deprive the story of this public interview of any concrete value. After some thought I finally decided to guide the conversation nearer to the subject rather than to put the question abruptly. So my next question was: 'Democracy implies the right of the individual to choose his own good. Dictatorship on the other hand implies the right of one individual or a party to choose what is good for the many. How, then, is it possible to combine the two concepts as it is sought to do in China under the name of democratic dictatorship? The name is a contradiction in terms.'

Chou replied: 'Democracy and Dictatorship are two sides of the political power in China. Peasants, workers, petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie are under the leadership of the Communist Party. These classes have democratic rights. They have all the freedoms – freedom of speech, Press, assembly and religious belief. They elect their government. This is what is meant by People's Democracy. The Chinese people exercise dictatorship over the overthrown classes, that is to say over landlords, bureaucratic capitalists and the KMT. Individual members of these classes are, however, given the chance to reform. Thus among the people there

is democracy, over the others dictatorship; the two are not contradictory but work in unison.'

I had no desire to argue that the leadership of the Communist Party implied the absence of freedom of choice. So while Chou was replying I thought over my question on Korea and framed it as mildly as I could. In my written questionnaire almost half the questions were concerned with Korea, but in the midst of so many people I could only put one question. This was: 'What does China seek to bring about in Korea? Does China consider the return of the UN forces to the 38th parallel as a necessary preliminary to peace in Korea? If this were done, would China guarantee the maintenance of the 38th parallel as a boundary between the North and South until the peaceful unification of the whole of Korea were achieved? Is it not possible to separate the question of the settlement of all East Asian problems from the Korean question in order to bring a speedy end to the sufferings of the Korean peoples?'

This was in October, 1951. The armistice negotiations still continue as I write. Chou En-lai's reply has therefore some significance still, though the statement has been followed by many others which continue the same argument with mounting bitterness. After repeating the usual charges of U.S. aggression and affirmations of China's peaceful intentions, Chou went on to say: 'The Chinese people hope now that the armistice negotiations in Korea will speedily reach an agreement on a fair and reasonable basis. Cease-fire and armistice are the first steps towards the peaceful settlement of the Korean question. Only after these first steps are accomplished can we proceed further in the peaceful settlement of the Korean question and other problems of the Far East. Of course, the American imperialists are not willing to follow this path. But we are confident that through the concerted and unceasing efforts of the Chinese people, the Korean people, other Asian peoples, and the people of the world, we shall open up this path.'

It was almost 2 a.m. and I felt that I must cease my questioning. The Indonesian Delegate had been quiet all this time. Meanwhile Chou turned to others in the room and invited questions from them. The Indonesian got up wit for

ten minutes in his own language. He was a good speaker and the Indonesian language has strength and power. When the speech was translated everyone present there realized that something important had happened. There was a tense silence. The Indonesian had asked : 'What is China's policy towards the overseas Chinese living in the various countries of South-east Asia? Will these Chinese accept the nationality of the country in which they live or will they be the means of Chinese imperialist expansion in Asia?' The question, accusing Communism of imperialist aims, as demonstrated already all over Asia and Eastern Europe, was harsh and insulting. Chou reacted with violence at first, but he was too good a host to forget himself for long. The momentary flash of anger expressed itself in the beautiful flourish of his hands and a harsh note in his voice which soon died down. But the anger permitted me to have two answers to the question; the one I took down and the other was sent to me when my copy went for official correction. I must give both the versions, for their very differences throw light on the Chinese policy. My notes read: 'The problem of nationality is of recent origin. Some countries in South-east Asia have adopted their own nationality laws. We are quite willing to enter into negotiations to consider this problem. We understand that people struggling for liberation are sceptical of outside influences. But we should believe in truth. You have been in China for three weeks and have seen the black and white of things. We should have knowledge of what we have seen. We sympathize with Indonesia's struggle against the Netherlands. We sympathize now with their struggle against American imperialism. Indonesians have suffered from Japanese aggression. Chinese too have suffered from similar aggression. We are nations which have been oppressed by foreign imperialism. We should therefore understand each other. You should know the Chinese people. We shall not defend our ancestors, who committed aggression against the Korean and the Vietnamese people in the past. We disavow them. We pledge that we shall not commit such mistakes. People's China will never be imperialist. Since we oppose aggression we shall never start aggression against others. Imperialists are spreading rumours against us to facilitate their own aggression and to disrupt our unity.'

The official version was:

'I think that since we are the nations which either have suffered from imperialist oppression, or are still suffering from it, we should be able to understand each other. Mohamad Tabrani of the Indonesian Delegation should therefore be able to realize how deeply sympathetic is the Chinese nation which has stood up after having been oppressed for a long time, toward the oppressed people in the world and especially toward those in Asia. We do not deny that in the feudal times of our history, our ancestors committed aggression against our brother countries in Asia, such as Korea and Vietnam. But that was a mistake made in the feudal times, and it was a crime of the feudal rule in China. All this we have already disavowed. We have already driven out the imperialists and overthrown the feudal forces. The new People's China today will absolutely not do such a thing. I believe that those of you who are present this evening, including our friends from Indonesia, have noticed here in Peking and will further notice when you are visiting other places how enthusiastic the Chinese people are to welcome you. The New China opposes aggression and will not start aggression against others. Finally let me remind you that the imperialists are spreading rumours to the effect that China will be an aggressor against others. Their purpose is to create disunity among us. But can you believe them? They hope to instigate conflicts and mutual suspicions among us in order to facilitate their aggression. Let us, the peace-loving people, unite and bear in mind a common saying "Beware of pickpockets."'

My copy came back to me all marked in red pencil accompanied by an official version of the discussion. I was requested to use what I liked from the official statement. I had to wait for more than three days before I could get back my copy and the version. Meanwhile I remained anxious in case others used the story.

Most of the changes in my copy were of words only. The Premier had had my questions with him for days and on his table I had seen some papers which must have been his prepared answers. Many of my questions remained unasked and some he omitted to

answer, such as whether China was prepared to guarantee the maintenance of the 38th parallel. But the question by the Indonesian delegate was sudden and direct. It involved wide issues, for throughout South-east Asia these overseas Chinese are playing a vital role which threatens the freedom and existence of many Asian countries. In a moment of anger Chou had sought to deny the challenge and affirm the Chinese willingness to settle the question peacefully. But mature consideration made it clear that this involved a commitment which China had no intention of carrying out. He had also taunted the Indonesian by telling him that Indonesia was still not free and required to be 'liberated' from the American imperialism and that he had not understood what he had seen in China. The disavowal of aggression was too passionate and final. All this had to be removed from the official version.

The five hours of discussion had produced something. I had felt Chou's easy grace and charm and had realized the control he has over himself. I have seen flashes of anger in Nehru often, but Nehru loses his control for the moment and then smiles an apology for his temper. Chou's anger, on the other hand, changed imperceptibly back into his friendly warmth. He made the listener feel sorry for having been the cause of irritation. Perhaps it was the traditional Chinese dignity which restrained him while his gestures conveyed the futility of all anger.

PART ONE

6

CHI PEI-SHE

My first visit to Peking stands out in my memory because of the long evening at Premier Chou En-lai's reception. The second was marked by a morning spent in Chi Pei-she's studio. The interview with Chou had to be arranged weeks ahead. I went to Chi Pei-she unexpectedly in company with a French Sinologist and his wife. I had been amusing myself by looking at art treasures of China which the curio dealers brought to my room. Among them were many paintings of Chi's. One evening I was casually mentioning how much I had enjoyed these paintings when my French friend told me that he was going to his studio in a day or two. I begged him to take me with him and he readily consented. So early one morning I set out on a long ride in a pedicab to south-west Peking, far away from the former fashionable section, accompanied by the French couple on their bicycles.

It was a beautiful spring morning and the fresh air along the broad avenue passing through the Tien An Man gate was pungent with the smell of jacaranda in blossom. The breath of old Peking was enveloping me in its graceful warmth. But the pedicab went on and on and I felt unhappy at the poor coolie's ceaseless pedalling. After crossing a maze of narrow *hutungs*, we arrived at Chi Pei-she's house. It looked small and tumbledown from the outside. A eunuch opened the door to us, and his effeminate voice sounded strange in New China. But as the door closed behind me I realized that this was real China and not all the screaming posters and loud slogans could make it otherwise. Here were poverty, want and hunger.

Passing through a small courtyard, we were ushered into what appeared to be a living-room, studio and perhaps everything else.

I then realized why no visitor would have been allowed to come here. Communism only shows one side of the face lest ugliness on the other side might shock the believer. Both under Communism and capitalism, beauty is created out of human distress. Here in this shabby studio, some of the best paintings of modern China were lying rolled up with dust of years upon them. Four broken chairs and a teapot adorned one corner of the room, while the other was occupied by a long high table covered with green flannel. This was the master's easel.

The master was sitting in an old deck-chair in a faded brown Chinese robe. The three of us sat around him. He is ninety-two years old, but age has not withered his creative genius. He sat there immobile, with his long Confucius-like face and grey eyes that looked far into the distance. His white scraggy beard seemed the only thing alive. His long, bony, transparent hands rested on the two arms of the chair. It was difficult to speak to him and wake him up. Besides, he only spoke Hunanese and knew no Mandarin. My French friend had therefore brought another Chinese who was an art teacher. Our interpreter was a member of the imperial Manchu family, but knew no English. So I had to have two interpreters, which made conversation more than difficult.

I had first seen Chi Pei-she at a State Banquet. In his long black silk robe, high velvet cap, he was slowly coming up the steps leaning on the arm of the trusted woman who he wanted to marry even at his age. In his other hand he carried a long red-lacquered staff. In the midst of blue-uniformed men and women he looked out of place. He seemed to walk out of the ancient Confucian lore, a sage to lead the people back to filial piety and ancestral worship. Today he looked as if the battle for men's souls had been lost and he wanted nothing more than to rest.

Chi Pei-she is New China's greatest artist. Yet he belongs to the traditional Chinese school of painting which is no longer considered art. For Communism does not believe in art for art's sake and Chi only paints flowers, birds, shrimps and lobsters. Ilya Ehrenburg, however, rediscovered him after the great painter had gone into oblivion with the revolution. The rediscovery brought him honour, but honour does not bring freedom from privations. No one wants

his delicate pictures and so the old man continues painting scroll after scroll, only to roll them up and put them away. The People's Democracy has, however, published an expensive volume of reprints for presentation to the honoured guests of the people, while the originals can be had for a trifle in Peking art shops.

The need for the double translations made conversation laborious and it was difficult to have my request conveyed properly. Meanwhile his companion poured out the customary tea for us and I was surprised to see that our cups contained just hot water, while there was tea in the master's cup. I realized then that he could not afford the luxury of tea-leaves. I hesitated no longer and made my request. No sooner had Chi Pei-she heard that I wanted him to paint than he got up full of energy and anxious to work. The change was sudden and complete.

He started rolling up his sleeves and muttered, 'Yes, I will paint for you, but it will cost you 44,000 *yuans* per square foot' (about 15 shillings). I readily consented.

'What shall it be? Flowers, birds, lobsters?' Chi Pei-she asked.

'I do not know. Paint what you like, whatever the spirit moves you to at the moment,' I replied. I told him that I was anxious to write about him so that the people in my country would know something about him. The Indian Delegation was in China on a Goodwill Mission, would he paint something to symbolise the ancient friendship and interflow of cultures between the two countries, and so on. But all my words had little meaning for the old man. So he again repeated the question. I did not want to suggest what he should paint, for I wanted him to create something of his own will, but Chi Pei-she repeatedly insisted. And so I blurted out, 'Do a landscape, I have seen too many of your pictures dealing with flowers.' For a moment the old man halted and stared at me hard, then he waved his hand at the interpreter and said, 'Tell him, it will cost double.'

I consented but asked him to give me credit as I had only English money on me. I was amused at the calculating old man, but realized his dire need for money. I knew that at the art shops I could buy his pictures at 40,000 *yuans* for a three foot square scroll,

but I wanted to see him paint and paint not only for the need of it, but for the novelty of being asked to do so as he himself wished. The old man's sleeves were pinned up and his woman companion brought out the thin paper from the cupboard. She then began to grind his paint. I watched him standing at the table with the white of his paper drawn tight in front of him. For a few minutes he stood quietly with a brush in one hand and the other hand feeling the texture of the paper. Suddenly he put his finger on one spot and began to paint. He looked up at me and said, 'I will paint a simple picture, for what is good is always simple.' For about forty minutes he continued to paint, occasionally mixing the black paint with water to get different shades of blackness.

I saw before me on the table a landscape of a meadow with two cows wallowing in the haze of a spring day. I knew that to the Chinese a black and white picture is the more sophisticated form of art, but frankly I felt a little disappointed at the utter simplicity of the picture. Without saying a word Chi Pei-she unpinned his sleeves and went back to his chair. His companion picked up the picture and hung it up on the line to let it dry. In my ignorance I was dumb and felt I had nothing to say. I even thought I could have bought a better picture by Chi Pei-she in an art shop at a much cheaper price. But I was determined to make a story out of my visit. And so commenced the conversation which laid bare the soul of a great artist and also the age-old spirit of China.

I asked the old man to tell me why he had painted the two cows one sitting and one with its back turned gazing away in the distance. 'Did the cows,' I asked, 'signify the two civilizations of India and China? Did they mean anything?' The old man shook his head and said 'There is no meaning in the picture. I am not a politician. They are just two animals, that is all.'

'But why,' I said, 'two cows and not something else.' Chi Pei-she replied, 'I just felt like painting two cows.' Then suddenly his face lit up and he said, 'The cows remind me of my childhood. Don't you know I was a cowherd till I was twelve years old? I have seldom drawn cows in my pictures, but today I remembered my childhood.'

'Was your childhood a happy one?'

'I was born in a very poor peasant family. A poor peasant does not think of happiness.'

'Where did you learn to paint? Why did you want to paint?'

'When I was eleven years old, an incident happened in my life which changed my future. One evening when I came back to my home with the cows my grandfather found that I had brought home one cow too few. I do not know when the cow had wandered away. My grandfather beat me and ill-treated me that evening, and so I ran away from home. I became an apprentice in a carpenter's family in the next village.'

I knew then what the cows in the picture meant. It was the cow that was running away from home. It was the cow that had brought him unhappiness in his home. It was the beginning of his creative art. I could feel the deep sense of unhappiness of his childhood in poverty. He had painted for me a picture which took him back to his village after eighty years of life all over China. He had found little happiness except in the village landscape where he had wandered without caring for happiness or sorrow. I was more than thankful for the picture that he had painted for me.

'How did you come to Peking?' I asked again. 'Have you not found success and happiness here?' 'I came to Peking at the age of fifty. For more than thirty years I wandered from village to village learning wood engraving and calligraphy and painting. I left my village and found beauty of nature in the Hunanese countryside. I had three masters who taught me to paint. My masters did not belong to the aristocratic and traditional school.'

I asked him again why he came to Peking. 'I was ambitious,' he replied, 'as I wanted to achieve something for myself and in Peking I was successful in selling my pictures. I knew that the mandarins wanted decorative art and so I painted pictures which would sell.'

His grandson, who had joined us by this time, intervened and said, 'My grandfather is not a bourgeois. When he said he wanted to achieve something for himself he meant he wanted to serve the people.' I saw the young man was wearing a party badge. He was also an artist, but painted pictures of the type which modern China wants. I presumed he painted portraits of Mao Tse-tung.

The grandson saw my sceptical smile and told me the story I

must repeat for what it is worth. 'My grandfather,' he said, 'even in the days of the Manchu period wanted to remain with the people and of the people. The Emperor offered to make him a mandarin, as his pictures were appreciated by the court. My grandfather declined to accept the honour and threatened to go back to the village and lead the peaceful life to which he was accustomed. My grandfather is and has always been of the people.'

I was amused because I do not know if paintings of flowers and birds and shrimps and lobsters have any meaning for the people. I have not seen Chi Pei-she's pictures hanging in the exhibitions and art galleries of New China. I saw only one huge painting of red and white dahlias in the sitting-room of Kuo Mo-jo, the poet politician. The great Chinese artist had not enough money to serve tea to his guests. He had only honour, which came to him because a Russian journalist liked his pictures.

I saw no prospect of learning more from Chi Pei-she, for now his grandson had taken charge of the conversation. The old man had grown silent and tired. I picked up the painting and left.

PART TWO

PRODUCE OR PERISH

PART TWO

7

LAND REFORM

Land reform is the single fact which has transformed the face of old China and rekindled the vitality of a people which had been choked under feudal despotism. Chiang Kai-shek had recognized that 'the centre of gravity of China's ultimate victory does not lie in Nanking or any other large city. It lies in the stout hearts of the people all over the country.' But Chiang rested his power on the feudal landlords and city *compradors*. Between the two he was never able to win the faith of the large masses of peasants who are the real China. Mao Tse-tung, on the other hand, relied entirely on the peasantry. 'The war of resistance,' he wrote, 'is really a peasants' war. Everything we use in resistance, everything we live on is really given to us by the peasants.' And again: 'The villages and the countryside will defeat the cities and the towns.'

In his book *The Chinese Revolution and the Communist*, Mao analysed the correct nature of Chinese society. 'Since our present Chinese society,' he writes, 'is colonial, semi-colonial, and semi-feudal, the chief enemies of the Chinese revolution are still the imperialists and the semi-feudal forces. . . . Therefore the nature of the Chinese revolution at its present stage is not that of a proletarian socialism, but of a bourgeois democracy. . . . Politically it is formed by several revolutionary classes which unite together to form a revolutionary democratic dictatorship over the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, and to oppose the transformation of Chinese society into a society of bourgeois dictatorship. Economically, it strives to nationalize all large capital interests, and all the large enterprises of the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, to divide up the large estates and to distribute them among the peasantry, at the same time helping the middle and small private

industries while making no attempt to abolish the economy of the rich farmers.'

This was heterodoxy indeed. For a Marxist to rely on the peasantry as the spearhead of the revolution was something novel. . . . But Mao is no dogmatist. He saw that the proletariat in China was limited in number and confined to the cities where they came under the guns of foreign powers. The essence of the struggle for power between Chiang and Mao was to win the faith of the peasantry. And Mao won because he succeeded in entrenching the Communist Party in the hearts of the farmers with his land reform.

The poverty of the Chinese peasant can hardly be imagined. In an agricultural population of about 410 millions, a mere ten per cent of the population owned sixty to seventy per cent of the land. Of the remainder about sixty per cent were poor peasant or landless labourers. They had very little land and worked as slave labour or leased a small plot of land at extraordinarily high rents to eke out a pitiful existence. It is estimated that on the average they paid fifty to seventy per cent of the yield as rent to the landlord. At times these exactions went as high as almost the whole yield. The peasant lived on a starvation level, an easy prey to all the epidemics and famines. He was therefore a ready recruit for arson, banditry or the army of an ambitious warlord. It can therefore be easily understood that land reform by distributing the land amongst the landless peasantry must have released a mighty passion for life in a people used to having nothing of their own.

Mao has kept his promise to the peasant. Land reform has been carried out in an area inhabited by about 310 million people.

'The essential content of the land reform,' stated Liu Shao-chi in his report to the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in June, 1950, 'is the confiscation of the land of the landlord class for distribution to the landless or land-poor peasants. Thus the landlords as a class in society are abolished and the land-ownership system of feudal exploitation is transformed into a system of peasant land ownership.' The Agrarian Law claimed that land reform was introduced 'in order to set free the rural productive forces, develop agricultural production and thus pave the way for New China's industrialization.'



Women in the village of Kao Kang in Manchuria

Peasants of the co-operative village of Kao Kang in Manchuria. The one on the right was the leader and anxious to talk about the benefits of mutual aid





On the Pearl River, Canton. The author with three members of the Indian Cultural Delegation to China at Canton (L. to R.: Frank Moraes, Editor, *Times of India*, Bombay; Chellapati Rao, Editor, *National Herald*, Lucknow; N. S. Bendre, Artist, Basoda; Raja Hutheesing, Author)

Mme Pandit at Mme Sun's Nursery School in Shanghai



Since production was the chief aim, the Agrarian Law did not touch the rich and the middle peasant. Mao had declared, 'We must no longer requisition surplus land and the property of the rich peasant; we must preserve our rich peasant economy, for nothing matters so much as the restoration of production in rural areas.' The rich peasant is defined as one who owns land or partly owns and rents more land on which he works himself but also hires labour. The middle peasant may own some land or hire land and depends wholly or mainly upon his own labour for his livelihood. Generally speaking, both the rich and the middle peasants' lands were not requisitioned, except in special areas where land owned by the rich peasants was also included in the distribution with the approval of the people's governments at provincial or higher level.

Basically, therefore, China abolished only landlordism by confiscation of land and other means of production owned by the landlords, and by shrines, temples, and churches, etc., and of the rural land belonging to industrialists and merchants. The land thus confiscated was distributed among poor peasants who had little or no land and no other means of production. The limitations of the Chinese economy have led the Communists to accept the capitalist class and the rich peasant as friendly categories. Both are a necessity for the maintenance of production in the country. But neither of them has a place in the future when the New Democracy will be replaced by the proletariat dictatorship.

Nevertheless the political consequences of land reform are far-reaching in their effect on the Chinese society. The technique adopted to carry out the reform brought the peasant, hitherto apathetic, into open revolt against his rulers in the village. Through 'Accusation,' 'Speak Bitterness' and 'Struggle' meetings, led by trained cadres of the Land Reform Teams, the peasants poured out their age-old pent-up feelings against their landlords. They denounced them and defied their gods and the religion which had made them believe in the inevitability of Fate. Much blood was spilled in the process, but the few landlords who escaped the wrath on grounds that they had not been guilty of heinous crimes were given a share of the land similar to the landless labourer so that they might reform themselves 'through labour.' Meanwhile peasants'

'associations' were organized and through them the Government at Peking was able to centralize the administration of the country far more effectively than ever before in the history of China. The peasant, having realized the dream of his life, leans on the Communist Party with trust and is willing to carry out its behests.

There are about 240 million acres of cultivated land in China, of which a little more than half thus came to the landless peasant under the redistribution. Since the distribution is per capita, the share of the peasant depended upon the size of his family and the area in which he lived. The average holding thus differs widely from area to area and between the North and the South. In the North-east near Mukden it was 2·7 *mows* per head, in the North around Peking 1·9 *mows* and in the South it came down to 1·3 *mows* per head (6 *mows* = 1 acre). Such small farms may satisfy land hunger, but they can hardly be economic holdings able to lead to increased production and full employment.

Owing to the poverty of the farmer, agriculture in China had been for long based on intensive cultivation on a gardening scale. The land reform by itself was hardly likely to lead to any substantial increase in production. It is therefore not designed to relieve the poor except by the removal of the high rents and other exactions of the landlords. In place of these charges, the peasant is today called upon to pay eighteen per cent of the produce in kind as land tax to the Government. I may say that no definite figure of the rate of this tax is available. In Peking and other places I have heard it to be only thirteen per cent while in *China Monthly Review*, a magazine run by two Americans which wholeheartedly follows the Communist line, it is stated to be twenty-seven per cent. Whatever be the figure, the peasant in the village looks more cheerful, better fed and clothed. It must be therefore accepted that he retains a greater share of the produce than formerly.

The Communists admit that the problem of poverty can be finally solved 'only if agricultural production can be greatly developed, if the industrialization of New China can be realized, if the living standards of the people throughout the country can be raised and if China finally embark on the road to Socialism.' Agricultural production can only be increased by the use of fertilizers

and mechanical farming. But the agricultural labourer now turned peasant farmer has neither the means nor the equipment to go in for such farming. Besides, the small-holdings must be turned into large farms through co-operatives or collectivization before such intensive cultivation could be made possible. Is this process possible in a country where the peasant is so deeply attached to the land?

Since land reform was intended to develop the productive forces of agriculture and thus pave the way for industrialization and improvement in the standard of living for the millions, claims are constantly made to show the increases in farm production. An agricultural surplus is necessary for national savings and the capital resources with which to industrialize the country. Statistics are therefore put forward to justify these claims, but such statistics have little value in assessing the economic condition of the country. They are always given in percentages of the previous year and therefore it is impossible to estimate the total quantity. Besides, in a country where there is no machinery for collection of statistics, any attempt to give them can only be mere guesswork. In China these figures have, however, a political purpose behind them. They seek to reassure the people that progress is only possible under the directions of the government of the country. I am interested in these statistics because with their help it is pretended to the underfed masses of the Asian countries that their salvation lies in following the Communist line.

Peng Chen, the Mayor of Peking, is one of the triumvirate which stands next to Mao and Chu Teh. He is the party puritan and disciplinarian. Clean shaven, stocky and heavily built, his words reveal stoical determination and complete loyalty to Marxism and Leninism. As Mayor of Peking he holds a vital position in the government of China. He is continuously called upon to handle difficult tasks which require the capacity of command and to enforce organizational discipline. He was in charge of the land reform in the North and in February, 1952, he was again called upon to head the anti-three and anti-five campaign.

In a brilliant speech to the foreign delegations visiting China on the occasion of the second anniversary of the People's Republic

Peng Chen claimed that China had an exportable food surplus as a result of the reform. For the last seventy-three years, China had been a deficit country. Now in two years, 1950 and 1951, the total agricultural production had gone up fourteen and eight per cent respectively. The increase of twenty-two per cent over 1949 had turned the deficit and food-importing China into a food-exporting country. So Peng Chen claimed.

In the village of Kao Kang, a model peasant had proudly told me that on 6 *mows* of land he had grown 11 *pickles* of millet when he tilled the land alone. This had gone up to 14 *pickles* of millet since he joined the mutual aid group.

On the other hand, Mr Liu, the district official, who was almost an orator and who was faithfully carrying out his job to impress the visitor, had asserted that in Kao Kang the production had gone up from 370 *catties* of millet per *mow* before liberation to 420 *catties* per *mow*.

I am by nature a sceptic. I do not get too enthusiastic about anything. I have seen and experienced poverty in my own country and I was willing to accept these statements, for they seemed to indicate hope for the millions of hungry Asians. But I do not get enthusiastic too easily. These 'facts' kept reminding me that one contradicted the other. There were others too which indicated different possibilities. The difference between 370 and 420 *catties* only worked out to less than 14 per cent increase. Again, 1 *pickle* equals 80 kilos equals 160 *catties* at most and so 11 *pickles* in 1950 and 14 *pickles* in 1951 for 6 *mows* worked out to less than 300 *catties* and 370 *catties* per *mow* respectively, I thought that I was wrong or the interpreter had erred as usual. But then I remembered what Nan Han Chen had said when he had spoken about the control of inflation. The agricultural production in China had gone down by thirty per cent during the inflationary period and now that the currency was stabilized the increase in production by twenty-two per cent was nothing extraordinary. Nan Han Chen is the Governor of the People's Bank and as such should know the real facts. According to him the foodgrains production in 1951 was ninety-two per cent of 1936. The figures for 1936 were considered a record production and included Manchurian produce,

and yet in 1936 China had imported foodgrains. The estimate was based on production of individual crops as follows :

Rice............	99·4 in 1951	100 in 1936
Wheat.........	88·5 ,,	,, ,,
Cotton.........	133·0 ,,	,, ,,
Tobacco......	130·5 ,,	,, ,,
Hemp.........	227·1 ,,	,, ,,

These figures clearly show that the production of foodgrains had not increased to provide China with an exportable surplus. On the contrary, with the increase in population between 1936 and 1952, the shortage must be much greater than before. If one considers the economic difficulties of the new peasant proprietors, no other conclusion is possible. The poor peasant who has acquired the land has no savings to purchase seeds or implements or to carry out any improvements on the land in order to carry on farming. There was a great scarcity of draught animals and even today it is not a rare sight to see human beings yoked to the plough. In fact this is very common all over the country. The distribution of the landlords' implements among the peasantry could not provide all that the poor peasant needed. In fact it is claimed that the Government of China have advanced 500 million U.S. dollars to the peasantry at varying rates of interest depending upon the purpose for which the loan is required. I was told that in one province a loan was given to exterminate the wolves. Loans for irrigation work were charged seven and a half per cent interest and were to be repaid in five years. For fertilizers the rate was twelve per cent and so on. What part of the peasants' income went in repayment of these loans it is difficult to find out, but the peasant indebtedness must form a substantial burden on the land.

The question then arises, how is China able to export foodgrains? It may be recalled that in 1951 China exported to India 500,000 tons of rice and millet. This year she has sent 100,000 tons. These exports have been made out to be political moves at the expense of the Chinese consumer. News items have been released from Hongkong stating that, while there was famine in some areas in China, China was exporting food to India.

Whatever the facts may be, there appeared to be ample supplies

of foodgrains available in the numerous towns that I visited. There was no rationing or any kind of controls. The prices of foodgrains varied from place to place, but such variations are due to transport limitations and attempts to rely on local economy.

The export of foodgrains comes from the surplus left over in the hands of the Government of China from the revenues it receives. The land tax is collected in kind. These receipts are utilized to meet the needs of the non-agricultural population in urban areas. Thus, in 1950, the Government was under the obligation of supplying foodgrains to about 80 million people. By reduction of the famine area of about 20 million acres in 1949 to seven million acres in 1952, China was able to reduce her obligations. Austerity living, controls of consumption and stoppage of public waste also helped. The Chinese Government, therefore, has on its hands some foodgrains which are left over after meeting all its obligations. It is these food-grains which are exported.

What I saw in the two villages that I visited convinced me that the increase in the agricultural production is due to normal conditions of life now prevailing in China. There is peace and order. Bandits and armed retainers of the warlords no more ravage the countryside. Secret societies hold out no terror. The peasant carries on his work without any fear of murder and rape. He has more things which he can call his own, for he can retain a greater part of the fruits of his labour. And above all the land on which he toils all day long is his own. He is happy because he has a little more cloth to wear, a little more food to eat.

The gods whom the peasant formerly worshipped and obeyed now hold no terrors for him, for his own efforts have done more for him than did Buddha, and he no longer feels that poverty is his fate. Today the temples are empty of their images and have become schools or meeting-places.

The abolition of landlordism also broke up the old tradition which imposed obedience to the parents and the authority of men over women. Many other influences have helped to change the family relationships, but in the villages land reform was the vital change which snapped the chains. Women have taken to literacy classes and were as anxious to show off their knowledge as little

children. In the crowds which collected around the visitors to the village, the women were most anxious to speak up and tell us all that they had achieved. Even in the peasant home in Kao Kang the peasant kept on referring to his wife for facts. There is an old saying that 'a poor man has no right to talk.' But New China was both looking up and talking. This was more important than the claim that production had gone up or that prosperity was round the corner.

Mao had spoken only of 'restoration of production in rural areas,' but the Agrarian Reform Law had claimed as its purpose the development of agricultural production to pave the way for industrialization. I have tried to show from the statistics supplied by the Chinese themselves that there cannot be any surpluses to promote national savings and thus create the capital necessary for China's industrialization. Land reform is a political revolutionary force and not an economic change. Small-holdings, which are now a common feature of the agrarian economy, are uneconomic and the pressure of population on the land is bound to lead to diminishing returns. Even the progress towards co-operative farming has its limitations, particularly in the South where farms are extremely small. The individualism of the peasant and his age-long attachment to land make the progress towards large-scale farming and crop planning tardy and difficult to achieve. Kao Kang was a single example of co-operative farming. Its progress in the country will depend upon industrialization and the capacity to absorb released labour. Meanwhile further fragmentation of farms will continue.

Chinese leaders recognize the danger but hope that the farmer will realize the advantages of the mechanization of agriculture and thus accept the need for collectivization. Nan Han-chen relies on mechanization to promote savings for industrialization, but today there is no saving. The export of foodgrains to India is so small that any conclusion from it as to an agricultural surplus is unjustified.

I was, however, surprised that my estimate of China's agricultural production was objected to by Mr Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador at Peking. He contends that the figures of production,

etc., given here are wrong. When I pointed out that I had got them from Peng Chen and Nan Han-chen, who could be expected to know what they were talking about, Mr Panikkar advanced another argument which I think deserves some consideration. He maintained that China imported foodgrains in the past because it was cheaper for the coastal region to get them from, for example, Indo-China than from West China. Transport difficulties restricted the development of internal trade. Besides, regional loyalties and the warlords prevented food being sent from one area to another. This was indeed a very plausible argument, but unfortunately the transport limitations are still there and the Chinese themselves rely on the statistics I have given.

Thus, though the land reform has not achieved its economic purpose, it has achieved a social revolution by satisfying the primary urges of the peasant. There may not be enough today to satisfy all his wants, and his bowl of rice may be only a little bigger than before, but it has been a fulfilment of an age-old desire. The peasants of China have therefore acquired a new faith, which is today the bulwark of strength behind Mao's Government.

Confucius was once asked to enumerate the three things vital to a ruler. The sage replied, 'Sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military power and sufficiency of popular faith in the ruler.'

When asked what he would omit if only two were possible, he replied, 'Omit military power.'

He was asked again what he would omit if only one were possible. Confucius replied, 'Let the people lose their food but keep their faith.'

The people of China have the faith – at least for the present.

PART TWO

8

VILLAGES ON DISPLAY

I visited two villages where the land reform had led to different developments in the village economy. The first village was only a few miles outside Peking, and mainly grew vegetables for the city. The population of the village was 2,050 (430 families) and they had between them 2,190 *mows* of land. The average per capita holding was about 1·7 *mows*. Before the land reform there were twenty landlord families who between them owned 1,435 *mows* of land. Today these families hold similar small-holdings to the rest of the village.

The Government in Peking had advanced to the villagers 126 million *yuans* (about £2,000). The village had gone through the reform early in 1950 and in the peasant homes I visited I saw signs of what it meant. Many homes contained clocks and large and small articles of porcelain ware which must have been obtained from the homes of the landlords. One of the families even had a small crystal radio set with earphones. The peasants had purchased many draught animals and carts and had dug new wells. 420 adults were attending literacy classes and a primary school with four classes was functioning with 160 children attending it. There was, however, no medical assistance available in the village. A travelling medical unit visited it and there was a medical centre at the district headquarters.

The village official claimed that, after the land reform, production had increased because the peasants worked harder and increased facilities of irrigation had been made available. A peasant family of ten was earning as much as twenty million *yuans* a year. The village had joined in the patriotic drive and had contributed 54·5 million *yuans* to the Aid Korea and Resist America fund. I

may add that it was difficult to believe figures of income given to me. The Chinese often translate one hundred thousand as one million and twenty million may well be two million. This latter figure appears to be a more correct estimate, for the standard of life of the peasantry was inferior to that of the peasant engaged in horticultural farming near one of the big towns in India.

The peasants lived in two-roomed houses, often sharing the house with another family. The living room had two *kangs*, one for each family, while the outer room, which served as a kitchen, had two cooking platforms, one in each corner. I visited the home of a former landlord family. They too lived on the same standard as the ordinary peasant and their big home had been shared out among those who had no adequate roof over their heads. It was evident that the levelling out had meant some increase in the means of livelihood for the many. It is possible that production had gone up, but it must be remembered that during the war years China's total agricultural production had gone down by about thirty per cent. I had been taken to the village on both my visits to Peking. As our party approached it over a dusty road, the villagers crowded round us. They were used to visitors because the village is one of the show places of the benefits of land reform. Our party was supposed to spend the whole day in the village, and so a midday meal had been arranged by the villagers. They received us with the usual hand-clappings which the guest is expected to return in similar fashion. Many in our party had not got used to this admirable custom and so stood quietly with shy and awkward smiles on their faces. We were then hustled into the Peasants' Association offices. While we waited in the office, children wearing red cravats flocked into the yard and sang songs of New China. The children were mostly members of Young Pioneers, who wear these red cravats.

Chinese children are perhaps the loveliest children in the world. Their pink chubby faces, flat noses and smiling eyes endear them to the visitor. We were happy to join in their play and sing our national songs to them. But at a signal all the mirth and crowding round us dissolved and they withdrew back quietly staring at us. Here was something I experienced on many occasions. There was

always a barrier between us and the people. Sometimes, as with the children, you cross it, but not for long.

The village officials called us back into the room to have tea with them, for everything in China begins with tea. The headman then got up and handed out a list of all the achievements in the village since Liberation. All such descriptions commence with what was 'before Liberation' and what is 'after Liberation.' In fact, New China's history can be dated BL and AL

The other village I visited was in the North-east, about 15 miles from Mukden. The North-east is the first area in which the land reform was carried out some four years ago and as such it was likely to have achieved its maximum results. Again, as in Peking, I was taken to the same village on both the visits. It may therefore be presumed that it is one of the show places. But this village was perhaps the most significant evidence of the development trends along which China will proceed. The village had materially changed in the eight months which had elapsed between my visits.

The village was named Kao Kang, perhaps after the name of the Chairman of the North-east Government. It had a population of 168 families, or 742 persons in all. Within its boundaries were 2,743 *mows* of land. The landless peasant had therefore been able to get as his share 2·7 *mows* per head while the middle peasant had about 3 *mows*.

There were in this village ten landlord families owning 2,413 *mows* of land before liberation. Now only two of these families were living in the village owning the same amount of land as the landless peasant. The other eight families had 'left' the village.

I was then given an example of the condition of the tenant peasant, who had rented about twenty *mows* of land. On this land before liberation he grew twenty-seven *pickles* of grain (1 *pickle* = 80 kilos = 160 *catties*). From this produce, he paid thirteen *pickles* as rent, six *pickles* to the Japanese, two *pickles* as other taxes, and one *pickle* as gift to the landlord. He was thus left with only five *pickles* for his own needs. I was also told that the average yield per *mow* before liberation was 370 *catties* and now it was 420 *catties*. Besides, the peasant now only gave eighteen per cent of his yield as

land tax to the Government and there was no other rent to pay. The figures of yield per *mow* before liberation does not tally with the figures given in the example. I have always found statistics confusing in China and relied more on the evidence of my eyes than on the figures. I do not doubt that the peasants' condition has improved. They looked better fed and better clothed, but there was little to prove that the agricultural production had gone up. Whatever increase there was, was due to the return to normal conditions of life after years of occupation.

But the village of Kao Kang was notable for the new experiment it was carrying out. After the distribution of land some farmers had joined into a mutual aid group. Others had formed labour exchange groups. In all, there were fourteen such groups in which forty families in the village were participating, with forty men and thirteen women as members. In the mutual aid groups the labour, agricultural implements and animals brought into the pool are valued according to the age, skill, capacity, etc., and paid accordingly. In the labour exchange groups, on the other hand, all labour is valued equally. Peasants joined one or the other group because their share in the land was more than they could till with the labour available in the family. It was difficult to get this admission from the village official himself, who was anxious to impress upon me the development of co-operative spirit in the village. I was interested in getting the reactions of the peasant directly from him and so I persisted in questioning the peasants one by one. Answers to my questions were often interrupted by the village official or our interpreters, and long discussions took place between themselves while I waited for my answer. Repeating the same question to as many persons as possible is the only way in a Communist country to learn the truth. The answers, though the same, vary with small nuances according to the person answering. Gradually, at the cost of being tiresome, you learn something more than you would from parrot-like repetition of the handouts.

So I learnt that peasants joined these groups because they had received more land than they could cultivate as they had many small children and no other person in the family to help them in the field. The women folk in such families were either ill or unavail-

able. I also learnt that the members of a mutual aid group did not put their produce in a common pool and then divide the produce according to the value decided upon, but each peasant paid for the aid received from the yield of his own farm. The village official and our interpreters had insisted that there was a common pool, but the peasant whom I questioned remained adamant that it was not so. I am sure the interpreters hated me at this moment as being an anti-Chinese. The mutual aid groups were thus groups who needed to employ extra labour which the land-owner paid for on the basis of agreed terms. They were in a sense employment exchanges and there was very little of co-operation in the real sense of the word. I was told that such groups have been formed all over the country. In this village about twenty-five per cent of the land had joined one or the other type of groups.

But the eight months which passed between my two visits changed the face of the village. From mutual aid groups it had moved towards co-operative farming of an advanced type. Farms with their boundaries had disappeared and in their place there was one big farm of about 450 acres. The co-operative recognized the ownership of land but with unified management. The co-operative decided on the crops for the whole area and the individual farmers invested into the plan their labour, land and farm equipment. The produce was divided on an agreed basis after making provision for tax and for seeds for the next season. Sixty per cent of the produce was allotted for labour, thirty per cent for land and ten per cent for cattle and farm implements. Each farmer then received his share according to what he had put into the common pool.

The village had thus been able to invest in modern animal-drawn farm implements on a hire-purchase system from the State. The co-operative had to pay twenty-five per cent of the value the first year, thirty-five per cent the second year and the balance the third year. I was taken to the farmyard and shown these implements. I was a little sceptical about the possibility of the village owning them. I had seen very few of these even on a State farm and China had little equipment to sell to individual villages unless for an experimental village. For a moment it occurred to me that the implements were there for our visit. It may or may not have

been so, but I could see the farm land as one big tract uncriss-crossed by boundaries of individual farming. It was also true, as it was admitted, that Kao Kang was the only village in the district which had gone into co-operative farming. But this was progress in the right direction, though it is bound to create many problems of employment as and when the movement spreads over the rest of the country.

Co-operative farming was a step in the right direction because the small-holdings could not lead to economic cultivation of the land. If modern methods are to be used for increased production, farming must become large-scale farming. In China the danger is that land will be further divided from generation to generation and thus lead to fragmentation and diminishing returns unless the burden of population on the land is transferred. The Chinese Government have therefore actively promoted mutual aid farming as a beginning. Now they are pushing the farmer to accept co-operative farming. Collectivization will follow when they feel that they have the peasant under control, so that the love of property which he evinces today with such violent emotion will not drive him to revolt. Peng Chen, the Mayor of Peking, in his explanatory speech to the foreign visitors in October, 1951, said, 'Collectivization can come only on peasant initiative. Any attempt to force the peasantry will result in the Government being overthrown. The process of fragmentation has reached its limit. Now collectivization is an economic necessity.'

Talking to the peasants of the co-operative village of Kao Kang, I was constantly brought face to face with the deep sense of attachment to private property which the peasantry showed. They were proud of the clothes they had been able to buy, the room they could now call their own, the pigs or chickens which they bred and the money they earned by subsidiary work. There are stories of how, soon after the new title-deeds to the land were given to the peasant, he would wake up at nights and go again and again to see the land which now belonged to him. Many Communists themselves narrate these stories.

I visited a peasant family of three who shared a two-room hut with another family. The man was short, stocky and tough. His

weather-beaten face was deeply lined. He had been a landless peasant before land reform. Today he was a model farmer owning just under nine *mows* of land. His wife, who sat on the *kang* next to us, wore a blue gown and like other peasant women who had been emancipated had short hair. While she sat with folded hands, the peasant constantly referred to her for confirmation of what he was saying. Sometimes she would correct or contradict him. It appeared that she was more knowledgeable about income figures than he. Their nine-year-old daughter kept running in and out of the house. She looked rather insipid for a Chinese child, and unkempt.

For more than half an hour he told of his good fortune. 'I grew millet and kaolian in my field. Last year I was a member of a mutual aid team and as a result I had better crops. I also bred some pigs and pulled the cart that takes the crops to the co-operative or the town. I had time to do subsidiary work and I earned more than three million *yuans*.'

I said, 'Now there is no mutual aid. You are a member of the co-operative. Will the land still belong to you?'

He looked at his wife and there was an argument between them, unintelligible to me, in which the interpreter also joined.

Slowly and haltingly he replied, 'Now I will have a larger crop of kaolian and millet. The land is still mine.'

'But perhaps you won't be growing kaolian any more,' I said. 'You will have to grow what the co-operative plans to grow. Would you then think the land belongs to you?'

The farmer looked at me, a little more puzzled.

'I have put my land and my cart in the co-operative and we will probably grow kaolian and millet again. The land is mine and so is the cart. I am told I will receive a share for my cart. I will get more than last year.'

'Do you like to work for others?' I asked him again. 'During mutual aid you only paid or received payment for the work you did for somebody else, and the land remained with you. Today where is the boundary of your land?'

'Mutual aid was good. I received help in my work. I will earn still more from the co-operative. I have only invested my land and my cart. The land is mine.'

There is enthusiasm for work and obvious pride in the improvement of his lot, but there is also determination to continue to possess what has been acquired after centuries of suffering. The People's Government of China is conscious of this limitation on all their plans for collectivization of the land. The crucial question is whether they will succeed in the near future in persuading the peasant to give up his property for the common good or whether they will be compelled to use force.

PART TWO

9

THE HUAI RIVER PROJECT

Along the broad expanse of the Huai, the river barge took its tortuous way slowly and languidly. Together with the Yangtse and the Yellow, the river swept the vast plains of China's heartland, nourished the soil but often brought great sorrow to the millions who depended upon it. Many centuries passed and the ancient people who lived here learnt a gentle art of living which abided with them like the misery and the poverty which abounded all around. Today, a new wind had swept over them disturbing the dust of ages and uncovering the human soul in search of happiness.

I have felt the vigour of a people who were fashioning their life anew, sensed the enthusiasm of the youth which marched to the beat of the new songs and seen their heroic determination to work and to build. But to what ultimate aim? I asked myself. Freedom from hunger, is it all that a man needs? What use is it to have a satisfied stomach if your mind cannot soar and reach out to the uncharted universe, if your eyes cannot see new forms and new beauty? I cannot answer the question, for I have not known hunger. But I know that hunger is the law of the jungle.

Here on the Huai and in the rest of the country, far away from Peking, I could see and feel the millions who made up this great country and learn something of the problems which afflict them. They were all around me, living and toiling on their junks or on their small fields. They worked as no other people in this world work. Little children marching with their small bodies bent across the wooden bar tied to the rope pulling the junk up the river, or a man and his child pulling a plough across the field which had power of life and death over the village beyond – this was China and it will remain so unless the revolution succeeds in loosing the yoke.

For a thousand years and more the Chinese peasant had borne the yoke and carried his heavy burden with little hope. The land was fertile and the mighty rivers brought both nourishment and a challenge. Living in isolation, China had cut herself off from the transforming processes of the world outside. Society remained stagnant while men clung to the past which gave them peace and security. Dynasties came and went, but the Chinese peasant remained apathetic and unconcerned, bound by ancestor worship, filial piety and the Confucian obedience to the ruler. Buddhism, which swept over the country in the fourth and fifth century AD, was not able to change the life of the people. Buddha, the prince seeking Nirvana of the self, became the god of infinite light strengthening the austere ethics of Confucianism, which called upon the people to sacrifice at the altar of the ancestors. The monarch was the supreme father of the nation. The millions of Chinese remained stagnant on the land, enslaved to the feudal landlords in whom all the political authority was vested, and were unable to free themselves from outworn customs and traditions.

New China has transformed all this. The peasant is released from the shackles of the past and the whole society is in the process of transformation. As Jack Belden says, 'The story of the upsetting of land relations in China is a rich cross-section of a new epoch that has dawned in an ancient land.' I could feel the new joy of the peasant in the little bit of land he possessed, his intense pride, and his faith in the Communist Party which had made this change possible. He walked with his back unbent and his eyes sparkled as he looked straight at you. His wife and daughter too shared in the glory. They were no longer shut up in the home cowering to hide their bodies from the lustful eye of the village lord. There was no incense-burning in the temples before the inscrutable Buddha attended by saffron-robed priests. New China has emerged and new men are in charge of her destiny. It must have been a hard task to break the solid crust of ages.

This earth was the source of such passionate feeling for the millions of China. It was easy to see why it was so. As I sat on the barge on this wet spring day, a cold and chilly wind was blowing across the plains of the limitless horizon. The landscape was vast

and over its curves twisted the watery rope that was the river, holding the little pieces of earth together. Even the passing of this little barge set up a ripple and changed the contours of the earth. The land, while it remained firm, brought life and hope. The peasant therefore clung to it with all his love of life and fear of death. He could stand on its firmness and fight for it.

The land was the be-all and the end-all for him. His life has changed, but I doubt if his attitude could change enough to make him conscious of events beyond the limits of his village. He has always lived for the day. He has never had the faith in all the tomorrows which the politician or the priest are so anxious to promise. He has always wanted to be left alone. And now that he has found his beloved earth again, what else could he want? Four thousand years ago an anonymous Chinese poet wrote:

From break of day,
Till sunset glow,
I toil.
I dig my well
I plough my field
And earn my food
And drink.
What care I
Who rules the land
If I
Am left in Peace.

For centuries the Chinese peasant had been left alone to the avarice of the local landlord, but now he could be left so only at the risk of overturning the society which his rulers were aiming to evolve. He was being called upon to march in processions, wave the five-starred red flag, learn his duties as a mere cog in the giant wheel of Communism which was slowly but surely turning. He must be prepared to shoulder many other tasks for what was called the common good. I have seen him and his whole family marching for hours singing the new song of 'Mao Tse-tung and Stalin,' holding out the few crumpled-up dirty notes of people's currency as a 'voluntary contribution' to 'Aid Korea and Resist America' with apparent joy, all in return for the land which he now possessed. He

has taken up the gun to join the people's Liberation Army, for the Army had been his ally, with its exemplary discipline. He was under an obligation, and every time he gazed at his field, he picked up a little clod of earth and felt its small grains in his hands, and his heart swelled up once again with love and joy. He would do anything for the men who had given him back his land. But how long will this sense of obligation last? He is by nature an individualist, but he can no longer be left alone.

I was here on the Huai to witness the massive sense possession of which, I was told, had moved more than two million men and women to come forward and help in a project to save the millions inhabiting this valley. It was a multipurpose project to harness the great rivers that had acquired the unenviable name of China's great sorrow. With us on the barge was the Deputy Chief Engineer, a woman who was in charge of the whole project. In Peking I had met many women holding important positions in the Government. There were the Minister of Health and the Assistant Minister of Justice, besides many others who were shining examples of China's liberated womanhood. They strode about in the drab Sun Yat-cen suit, made of poor-quality, China-blue cotton cloth, their hair brushed back and held by two bobby clips. No cosmetics highlighted their ivory skins. They were grim, earnest and stridently aggressive.

Even the three women interpreters – *kanpus*, petty officials of the Foreign Office – who accompanied the Delegation, took themselves seriously and seldom relented to smile. I remember the interpreter who had accompanied me on my previous visit to China as a young woman who never showed any interest in the fineries of life. I asked her once if she wouldn't like to wear nice clothes, Pert came the reply, 'We will wear nice clothes when our country is able to afford them.' Once in Shanghai I was feeling a little happy and gay, and so I turned to her and hummed a dance tune knowing the Chinese enjoyed dancing. I met a cold stare and was gently reminded that China did not like bourgeois sentiments. I was reduced to silence. The proverbial gentleness and femininity of a woman was no more in China. A revolution must harden even a soft heart or else it must fail.

But this woman engineer was a dominating personality. She had

under her authority thousands of men whom she must organize and control. She had the consciousness of power and the confidence of an old Party associate, for Chien Chen-Ying had joined the Communists in 1941 in Shanghai as a student and escaped to the liberated area in 1942 to fight against the Japanese. For two days on the hundred-mile journey upstream in a tiresome barge, she held my interest with the spell of her raucous voice. She walked about the narrow gangway with an easy shuffle, her manly shoes sticking out over a pair of garish red coarse woollen socks and blue cotton trousers which were rolled up at the waist and unusually short at the ankles. She was obviously respected and admired by the staff, for they clustered around her and listened to her with fawning eyes. There was nothing pretty about her. Her high cheek-boned face, straight hair, and teeth which protruded out of a broad smiling mouth arrested your attention because of a pair of eyes fastened on you with an unhesitating self-assurance. There was a twinkle of laughter or anger which took possession of them in turn. She was not just an engineer or a plain woman, but a personification of the self-convinced arrogance of a Communist, and I was fascinated.

For seven hours, with breaks for lunch and tea, she spoke about the technical and other details concerning the Huai River project. 'For nine years under the reactionary Kuomintang, the people of this region suffered terrible floods. Five million people died. It is only under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party that an honest effort could be made to avert such disaster. In 1938 the reactionaries breached the dykes on the Yellow River, which then changed its course and flowed into the Huai. The Huai in turn was thus silted up and the region between the Yellow River and the Huai became one vast lake.'

Hatred for the reactionaries could easily be made to well up in the minds of the ignorant by such statements which unashamedly suppress facts. What interested me, however, was the attempt to impress a group of visitors who could be expected to be familiar with recent history of China. But such is the gospel of Communism. We were to hear such versions of history too often, and it was necessary to remain vigilant if we were to form a correct appreciation of what we were told.

Since the fourteenth century 935 floods and droughts had afflicted the people who lived along this usually serene river. They called her the 'Young Maiden' and loved her as no other river was loved. 'Wherever we go, no matter how far we go, there is no place like Huai,' they sang, but she brought much sorrow and many calamities. The welfare of fifty million people was tied up with this valley. It was one of the most thickly populated areas of China and offered an opportunity to any government anxious to strike deep roots in the affections of the people. The Communists seized upon it, for in 1949, immediately after the declaration of the Republic, Mao Tse-tung announced: 'The Huai must be harnessed.' The Huai River undertaking reveals all the strength and the weakness of present-day China, the wealth of man-power and the poverty of technical skill. The Chinese peasant had worked year after year to maintain the system of dykes and canals. If the dykes were breached, the river flooded the countryside and silted up its own bed. The peasant stood by, a victim of his own helplessness. Any attempt to rebuild the dykes required the mobilization of peasants in their millions. But the Communists succeeded in doing it. Fifty thousand Communist Party members and 100,000 youth leaders were spread over the districts to activize and mobilize the people. Meetings, slogans and processions were organized and young peasants, victims of the Japanese or the local landlords, were put on the platform to remind the people that the Government had given them the land. It was now their turn to work harder than the cadres who worked for them.

'Happiness through hardship,' 'Sweetest through bitterest' the peasant was repeatedly told, and he listened. 2,200,000 men and women were drafted to labour, often with their own spades, during the off season, that is to say, between the autumn harvest and the spring sowing. They were given free accommodation, medical care and 4 *catties* (1 *catty* = 1·1lb) of rice as their daily wages. They worked on an average for eighty days in the year. During the last two years they have rebuilt 2,191km of dykes and dredged 864km of river bed.

But it was not enough to reopen the river course. The flow of the water had to be controlled and the water conserved. There are

some two hundred tributaries which empty their waters into the Huai. These are to be controlled by building twenty-one reservoirs in the mountainous region where these tributaries originate. A dam is already built in the middle valley for the purpose of reducing the flow from 13,000 cubic metres to 6,500 cubic metres per second. Further storage capacity will be created by regulating and deepening seventeen lakes, including the great Hung Cha lake in the middle and lower reaches of the river. The plan gave directions for the building of dams, sluices and culverts, but technical skill and equipment are needed as well. It is stated that about 16,000 technical men, which number includes foremen as well as students and top engineers, are engaged on the project, together with some 40,000 administrative cadres. It is difficult to believe these figures, for China has not got the trained personnel to be able to spare such large numbers for a single project. There is, however, a tendency in Chinese industry to consider a 'model worker' as almost an engineer, and at the end of 1950 there were some 24,672 model workers elected from the men working on the Huai project.

The woman Deputy Chief Engineer who is in charge of the whole project is herself not a qualified engineer. She had been a student in the third year in the engineering faculty of Shanghai University before she escaped to the liberated area. But while I listened to her talk on the barge, I was under her spell and did not realize that all the talk of a multi-purpose project was more a propaganda talk than a reality. I was to realize this only after seeing the 'dam' at Junghochi, which is supposed to be the main structure which will ultimately be the central point of control of the Huai River valley.

This journey upstream was full of many disappointments. But it also contained a vital lesson for an Indian. A project which seeks to irrigate about eight million acres of land and directly benefit seventeen million people and bring safety to some fifty million more must appear gigantic in its proportions. Besides the local population involved, the number of men and women that it claimed to have mobilized for its speedy accomplishment made the project perhaps the biggest talking point in favour of the 'new democracy' of China. I was therefore not the only person who was anxious to see it. The

Indian Delegation which I was accompanying was eager to learn lessons which might be helpful in dealing with the many similar problems which face India today. The Delegation was being taken 100 miles up the river at the special request of the Prime Minister of China. No other visitors had so far been taken to see the construction work, they were told. In spite of many inconveniences of the small barge, they pursued the journey with avid interest. It was, however, to prove a fruitless trip.

We passed many villages along the banks, but they seemed to be leading their humdrum daily life. There were no signs of tremendous activity. The work on the dykes was finished. At least it appeared to be so, and the river was contained within her bed. We occasionally saw a children's procession carrying the red banner. But it was a silent routine march. There were no songs or slogans. Even the three nights we slept on the barge were unmarked by the beat of Yangko drum. It was spring and the farmer was busy. Apart from a solitary old-fashioned dredger clanking its chains as it scooped up the silt, I saw nothing. Life seemed to go on unmoved by the great purpose of harnessing the 'Young Maiden.' But I remained hopeful. Perhaps at the great dam of Junghochi we would see something of the moving enthusiasm which had swept the millions to attempt to conquer seemingly insurmountable difficulties with bare human hands.

We passed innumerable junks carrying their load of men, women, and children. They drifted along the river with no apparent purpose. The tiny tattered junk was for many of them their only home. It will be a long time before the teeming millions of China find a stable life and a roof over their withered bodies. And so, after forty-eight hours of slow and tiresome journey, we arrived at Junghochi, hoping to share the enthusiasm of New China. But once again it eluded us.

I looked at the sight with baffled surprise. So much had been told about this project and of how it had been completed in three months last year 'by the strength and the intelligence of the masses of the people.' We saw before us not a dam but a simple 'anicut' with three sections. The first section was the open river bed, the second section was 300 metres long with eight sluice gates, and the

third section with four sluice gates diverted the waters to low-lying fields which were called lake area. Many statistics of men and material used had been given, but here was something so simple that I felt I did not want to look at it. Our guide and host, the Deputy Chief Engineer, saw the obvious disappointment on my face. There were no enthusiastic millions of rural workers nor any evidence that they could have been housed here for three months. A few hutments stood in the lake area and that was all. Even the construction of the third section was not complete. And the whole theory of flood control seemed to be to flood the less fertile upper regions of the river's course and thus free the middle valley. The Deputy Chief admitted this, but she defended the approach on the ground that the lower region was more fertile than the area now coming under floods. My disappointment hurt her pride, but she tried to keep it up by pointing out that the entire dam was the work of the Chinese people. 'The sluice gates, the concrete mixers and everything that we needed,' she asserted, 'was made in China. We have spent money equivalent to 1,350,000 tons of rice. We shall build the lock on the open river later.' The work was now going on further upstream at Futzling and if I was interested in seeing China at work I should have gone there. It is always so in Communist countries. What is of interest is generally out of your reach. One must be content with what is dished out in innumerable official statements and handouts.

The visit to Junghochi on the Huai was, however, useful. It gave a silent proof of the fact that the land reform had ironed out many problems which baffle river-valley projects in other countries. The question of compensation and resettlement of peasants removed from catchment areas offered no difficulties. Such peasants could be given a share in the distribution of the land somewhere else.

There was also a realistic approach to the immediate problems. China was content to seek remedies which lay within the scope of the technical skill and equipment available to her. She was able to mobilize her vast manpower and make it work. Without the labour of millions, Huai dykes could not have been built within the period required. I missed, however, the feeling of the moving force behind the great upheaval which, it is claimed, is changing the face of this

ancient land. Official publications describe the change in the outlook of the peasant as resulting from the land reform 'which for the first time gave them land of their own, free of both rents and debt.' The peasant, according to them, now knows that he is toiling for himself and this change is decisive in the constructive effort to industrialize China. I have seen this new sense of ownership filling with enthusiasm the peasant in the villages we visited elsewhere. The land for him has been a symbol of hope, and hope can move the mountains of difficulties which beset China. But love of possession and socialism's love of the common good are two different emotions.

PART TWO

10

THE CHINESE WORKER

'It was passion and principally passion,' Jack Belden writes, 'that overwhelmed Chiang Kai-shek. The radiant hopes and murderous hates that the Chinese peasantry poured into the sphere of war and revolution released a flood of emotional energy that exploded with the force of an atomic bomb within Chinese society, nearly dissolving it.' World War II had unleashed these passions in the peasantry, traditionally apathetic but now driven by utter despair and hatred of their overlords. Their cry 'Down with the landlords who drink our blood' was taken up by the Communists, who had hitherto advocated only rent reductions. The Communists rode to power on the crest of the promise to abolish landlordism and redistribute the land among the peasants.

The revolution in China was thus entirely an agrarian revolution. It is therefore to be expected that the peasant influence would dominate the State. The Communist theory of class struggle conceives of working-class leadership and dictatorship as the essential factor in the building up of socialism. The Chinese proletariat, which numbered about two million of industrial workers, was weak though potentially most revolutionary. The Communist Party must then aim at strengthening the working class as against the peasantry, which is essentially individualistic and conservative. The peasant, his land-hunger satisfied, wants to be left alone in peace. It is this conflict between the worker and the peasant which must one day decide the future of Communism in China.

The Communists are aware of this contradiction and have therefore left the peasantry in possession of the land. They realize that any attempt to socialize land can only be at the dire risk of the overthrow of the State. In the previous chapters we have seen the slow

and watchful steps taken towards co-operative agriculture. Meanwhile by constantly reminding the people of the leadership of the working class and building up an ideologically strong and united proletariat, the Communist Party is preparing for an open and avowed dictatorship.

The labour movement in China is therefore a vital instrument of the Government. It receives material help and many other facilities from the Party in power. In return the working class is expected to carry out the policies of the Government, and consolidate the power of the Communist Party which controls them. Under the Trade Union Law, responsibility to see that all laws and regulations concerning the workers are strictly carried out by the industry is put upon the unions. They take part directly in the management and production in State owned industry through factory administrative committees. This has brought all the workers under the control of the unions, though technically they are free to join the union or not. Today the All-China Federation of Labour has a membership of more than six million which includes workers in all the industries, posts and telegraphs, rail and sea transport, education, Press and printing etc.

Joint committees have been introduced to give the workers what is claimed to be the right of democratic management. In the public owned factory, however, the committee is under the Government Industrial Administrative Bureau and is mainly concerned with the drive to speed up production. The production plans and other directives are handed down by the Government bureau and the committee is required to see that such plans are carried out. As far as wages and other matters concerning the workers' welfare are concerned, the committee does little apart from what it is told to do by the State. There are instances when a private industry has been taken over by the State, and the workers have been made to accept a reduction in wages.

In the privately owned industries, however, these joint committees have led to much conflict. In Shanghai many industrialists reported that interminable discussions in such meetings wasted considerable time without any results being achieved. Wages, retrenchment of redundant staff and other disputes continue, and

the Government Labour Bureau to whom such disputes are referred intervenes on the side of the workers. Often these very disputes are settled immediately on the basis of the employers' views once the industry is taken over by the State. Managements' rights to adjust wages, allocate work, dismiss workers and regulate production remain only on paper, while many privately owned industries, apart from textiles, suffer from dwindling profits as the costs of production bear little relation to prices which are regulated by other considerations.

The trade unions are, however, the agencies through which the economic and political purposes of the Government are effectively carried out. According to the official Guide to China, the activities of the All-China Federation of Labour include 'emulation campaigns in the movement for increased production, improvement of safety measures and health conditions in industry, and the establishment of cultural palaces and clubs with the aim of gradually eliminating illiteracy among the workers and helping the workers to study Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's theory of the Chinese Revolution.' The trade unions are therefore utilized on the one hand for the speed-up of production and on the other for political purposes.

The *China Reconstructs* writes: 'The Chinese worker now feels a new zest for life. He knows that he is the master of his country. In the factory he has practical experience of the fact that every step in increasing production is a step forward in his earning and general welfare. Instead of being docile and passive, he now exhibits initiative.' The initiative, however, has been provided by the political campaigns which have been carried on from time to time. During the last two years there have been three campaigns in which the working class has been called upon to play the leading part, and these have been so managed as to work up the class struggle. In the beginning it was the weeding out of Kuomintang reactionaries, then came the Aid Korea and Resist America and finally the San Fan Wu Fan movements. Apart from the economic and financial reasons behind these campaigns, they helped to rouse the workers as the leading class in the State and gave them the feeling of active participation in the State.

The other aspect of the labour movement as a means to increase production was organized through patriotic pacts and emulation drives. Korean War and Fighter Plane Fund also provided the necessary patriotic appeal. But the real initiative was provided by the system of electing 'model workers' in every plant or construction activity and granting them many privileges, including higher wages. Such model workers were always present when visitors came to see the factory, proudly showing off their medals and decorations. Many 'inventions' and claims of high production were made in their name. They received much publicity and were specially sent to Peking or other places to march in May Day and other parades in places of honour. I saw many of them in the course of my visits to the plant, quietly grinning in their rather new but crumpled blue suits, awkwardly conscious of their new privileges.

I do not know what actual achievements qualified the worker to be elected a 'model,' for I have not seen any evidence of the claims made for these models. But the fantastic claims made on their behalf and the liberal use of the word invention staggered my belief that technical skill grows slowly even under guidance. But perhaps the knowledge that they are not working for the capitalists 'but for themselves and for the good of the whole nation' released a flood of talent, and geniuses are springing up round every corner. This is what *China Reconstructs* reports: 'When the Tientsin Automobile Assembly Plant decided to make its first car, instead of just putting cars together, it was found that many tools were lacking. The workers talked this over, and improvised what was needed out of old machines and spare parts.' The car that I saw exhibited in Tientsin was the product of this 'invention'!

I could see in the textile industry the actual results of these inventions. There is a shortage of cloth and so a national hero had to be built up who by his work methods promised plenty in the future. The story of Ho Chien-hsiu was therefore provided. It concerns a living person who has reaped her reward by her 'achievements' in the textile industry, and so the people must believe it. Here is the story:

'Shantung is also the home of the nationally famous seventeen-year-old Tsingtao model textile worker, Ho Chien-hsiu, who

succeeded in cutting the proportion of cotton wasted in spinning on the spindles she tends from 1·5 per cent to 0·25 per cent. Her method has been introduced as standard throughout the country's textile industry. When universally used, it will increase annual production by 44,460 bales of yarn, or sixty-four million yards of cloth, without a penny of additional investment in machines or raw materials. These extra textiles are sufficient for the use of four million people a year at China's present rate of per capita consumption' (*People's China*, April 1st, 1952).

'Since her achievement became known, Ho Chien-hsiu has been the recipient of many high honours. She was sent as a workers' representative to the November session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Peking, taking part in the proceedings with national leaders in all fields. She was also elected a model member of the New Democratic Youth League. But her greatest satisfaction comes from the fact that her method is being successfully applied on an industry-wide basis and that it represents a resounding victory over conservatism' (*China Reconstructs*, May–June, 1952).

I was able to see what this new method which had won national fame had yielded at Hengyuan textile mills. Pien Shih-ching was the only one who gave actual statistics of production. Before 'liberation' Hengyuan mill employed 1,000 workers. Today it employs 1,800 and works two shifts, of ten hours each. Before 'liberation' the production was 64lb of yarn per spindle and 47·16yd of cloth per loom per day. Now the mill produces 97lb of yarn per spindle and 83yd per loom twenty hours per day. These statistics reveal that the efficiency of the Chinese worker was at best equal to, if not less than that of the Indian textile worker.

Since in a worker's State the worker labours for himself and for the State, I was interested in the wages in various industries. It is no longer the function of the unions to act as a means of joint bargaining with the management. The State has fixed the minimum wage as the cost of living for two adults. This minimum wage is paid on the basis of piece-work. It was, however, difficult to obtain any clear information on what was included in the cost of living. In Mukden, where the wages are paid on the basis of points,

one point includes, 0·48 *catty* rice, 0·32 *catty* flour, 0·05 *catty* oil, 0·2ft white cloth, 0·02 *catty* salt and 2 *catties* coal. The point was valued at 1,900, *i.e.* about sevenpence. On the Huai River project the peasant workers were paid 4 *catties* of rice plus housing. But I was told that out of this wage the peasants consumed 3½ *catties* for food. Whatever be the cost of living, the wages in factories I visited in Manchuria amounted to £3 1*s.* minimum to £9 3*s.* maximum per month for workers, while the model workers, now classified as technicians, were paid about £11 14*s.* In Tientsin in the textile mill the workers' wages were in terms of millet and worked out to about £10 per month. These wages are comparable to those obtained in the Indian textile industry. In the heavy industries in Mukden wages are low.

I have, however, heard in Shanghai that no sooner is a factory taken over by the State than the union agrees to lower wages than those previously obtained as the workers' contribution to the economy drive of the Government. Nevertheless it is a fact that the present wages in China represent an increase both in cash and real value. Besides, the Labour Insurance Regulations passed in March, 1951, give considerable protection against old age and sickness.

Under the law, the management is called upon to bear the medical expenses and wages of workers on sick leave. Workers receive full pay for three months for occupational injuries and half pay for non-occupational injuries. For a further period of three to six months they receive one-third to one-half pay from the insurance fund. After this they can draw disability pension. Retirement pensions are given from the insurance fund for men and women over the ages of sixty and fifty respectively. The qualification for such pension is twenty-five years' service with ten years' service in the enterprise from which they retire. Women workers are paid full wages for fifty-six days for confinement and also maternity benefits from the insurance fund. The entire cost of labour insurance is borne by the State and the employer and employees make no payments towards it. The law, however, is only applied to factories of certain size, though the smaller firms are expected to follow the example as far as possible.

Painting by Chi Pei-she. The artist painted this picture at the author's request



九十二歲白石老人



The unions together with the management have set up rest homes, sanatoria, nurseries, etc. In the factories cheap cafeterias provide diets specially adapted to the conditions of the employment. There are, however, no leave rules and a worker is not allowed to remain absent without sufficient grounds, such as illness. There is also no dismissal from a job. I have referred to the difficulties experienced by the foreign firms about retrenchment, but this is a general regulation, as otherwise China would be faced with the problem of serious unemployment in the working class. They cannot return to the land, as the peasantry is already under-employed.

Such a policy is possible because the cost of production is no consideration in a Communist economy. In fact it was difficult to obtain any idea of costs in any of the factories I visited, and possibly no costing figures are maintained. As the country is short of all manufactured goods the prices of manufactured articles are adjusted to the need of controlling their consumption and maintaining a stable economy. Thus wages too were determined, I was told by the manager of a Mukden factory, by 'the general productive conditions of the whole country as directed by the Government,' which implied by the need of controlling consumption, and not by the conditions of the particular industry, as is usual in capitalist economy.

It was, however, evident in every factory I visited that the workers feel a new sense of ownership and are conscious of the fact that they are the leading class in the nation composed of working class, peasantry, bourgeoisie and the national capitalists. In every political and economic activity in the country the worker is pushed to the forefront and reminded of his duty to lead the Chinese people towards socialism.

Here is a story of how this consciousness was allowed to be expressed during the Wu Fan inquisition of the commercial houses. It was the examination of Chen Tsung-shen of China Tooth Brush Co, by a seventeen-year-old apprentice as reported in the Chinese newspapers:

QUESTION. What does an apprentice do?
ANSWER. Learn a craft.

The Peking Hotel, Peking. Once a famous hotel – now only a Government hostel. There is no traffic on the avenue – and all the cars parked in front of the hotel are only for the guests of the 'People'

QUESTION. Why should he be beaten then?

ANSWER. This is my mistake.

QUESTION. What should be done?

ANSWER. To subject myself to the leadership of the working class and to lower my head to the workers.

QUESTION. Why did you hand your confession to the Government and why does the Government transfer it to us?

ANSWER. Because you are the leading class in the country.

THE CROWD. Yes! then what kind of a person are you?

ANSWER. I am a bad merchant.

QUESTION. Are you a criminal?

ANSWER. Yes.

And so once again the aim is to arouse the passion of the people by skilful propaganda and promises of the millennium to come. Such promises are made real by promoting intensely a sense of possession and fomenting hatreds against what appears to prevent the possession of the object desired. And then hope is rekindled with the help of living 'models.' Even I, a casual visitor to China, have sensed this emotion of the Chinese worker. He is known for his capacity to work hard and lift heavy burdens. But today he works with hope. He is no longer apathetic. He wants to learn the job he is doing, to read and to write. Mere enthusiasm cannot teach him to handle the machine or obtain for him a new one. He must be patient and be prepared to accept all sacrifices save that of his honour. China cannot, however, reach her goal by the methods she is following.

PART TWO

II

FOREIGN INTERESTS

Any estimate of China's industrial effort today must take into consideration the existing foreign industrial establishments, the possibilities of their future expansion by further investment and the availability of local technical know-how and skill. It is an accepted fact that there was in the past little if any effort to industrialize the country and to develop her vast resources. Except for the few industrial centres along the coastal belt, most of the vast hinterland remained a rural area producing raw materials for export and dependent upon imports for all vital needs of manufactured goods. China was just a vast dumping ground for all the surpluses of the industrialized West.

The few industries which developed were mostly concerned with the manufacture of such essential goods as cloth, soap, cigarettes, coal and public utilities like transport, water supply and electricity. Many of these were owned and managed by the foreigners who came to China lured by a huge home market and the possibilities of unchecked exploitation. Large profits were accumulated and taken out while the people of the country had no say in the prices, wages or the fiscal policy of China which could have arrested their exploitation. The Chinese say that the foreign investors recouped their original capital investments twice or thrice in a few years.

China's economic development was arrested by lack of transport. The railroads run from north to south along the coastal areas and the hinterland remains cut off from the rest of the country. Only the rivers provide east-to-west traffic. There are about 12,000 miles of railroad, originally managed by four powers – Britain, Japan, France and China – in this huge country. Everything is expensive except the human being, who is the real beast of

burden. The teeming millions of China know poverty and misery and have existed for centuries clinging to the land as the last desperate hope of life.

In such a situation a wise government sees the urgent need of improving the standards of life of the people. There can be no other paramount consideration except to maintain the freedom and integrity of the country. But the Communists in China, as elsewhere, seek power and domination and not the betterment of the people. It was easy to turn the sorrow of the millions into a bitter anger against the foreigner who had heaped many indignities upon a gentle and quiet people. Even such anger might be worthwhile if the dynamic energy released by it could replace the skill, the know-how and the capital necessary for constructive effort. Unfortunately the little that I have seen in China does not warrant any such hope.

I have tried to show in the previous pages that land reform was more a political measure than a step to improve the life of the people. It is in fact likely to yield diminishing returns and under-employment unless it is accompanied by rapid industrialization of the country. On the other hand China's efforts towards industrialization are strictly limited by her lack of capital equipment and technical guidance and are solely directed to reconstructing the little she has. There would still be some hope if China could herself supply the necessary skill from her workers and engineers. But even in this direction she is badly handicapped.

It is true that China's railroads are today efficiently managed. Through traffic is provided from north to south over an integrated system. It is also true that many of the public utilities, such as water supply and electric power supply, which have been taken over from the foreign concerns, as in Shanghai, are ably administered, contrary to the fears expressed in some quarters. But it is also a fact that many of the industrial plants are poorly equipped and lack technical guidance and managerial ability, because the necessary personnel is not available. Even the universities and technical institutions are not in a position to fill this want in the near future.

I have visited practically all the famous universities in China and have seen the many handicaps from which they suffer. There

is little equipment for practical training and the sudden replacement of English texts has left these institutions with hardly any books in Chinese for educational use. The needs of the administration are so great that students are drafted into jobs immediately they finish their education. The universities are preoccupied in solving immediate problems or in manufacturing spare parts for some industry. They are thus unable to give a general technical training or prepare the students to meet other requirements. China is therefore in no position to meet her needs of technical personnel either today or in the near future.

It is often reported that China has received considerable technical assistance and that there are thousands of Russian technicians in China, helping her to rebuild her war-torn economy. It is difficult to know the exact number, but everything indicates that the Russian technicians are insufficient in number to provide all the assistance China needs. I have seen some Russians living in the hotels where I stayed in Peking, Mukden and Tientsin. They left the hotel early in the morning, ate their meals in separate dining-rooms and kept to themselves. They went about in cars specially reserved for them. Often such cars moved about the city with dark curtains drawn across their windows. I was told that they were technical advisers to the Chinese Government, organized as a military corps of engineers, etc., and were working in bureaux appointed to look after particular industries. They were under strict discipline and received a small salary plus board and lodging. Throughout my two visits to China I never came across any of them in any industrial plant. Only at the headquarters of the Huai River Harnessing Committee at Pang Pu I saw a painting in which the Russian water-conservancy expert Bukoff was depicted discussing the project with the Chinese staff in charge of it.

All the factories that I visited appeared to be working under Chinese management without any day-to-day technical supervision or guidance. The Russians only came in when any problem arose which the Chinese could not solve, and only when such problems were referred to the bureau concerned. And yet there is no doubt that the Chinese had learnt from the Russians the technique of government, propaganda and the juggling of economic

facts. The Communists had thereby learnt the art of wielding power and holding it, but the country had been deprived of the prospects of early economic reconstruction.

Old China, however, had other sources which the new Government could have utilized if they had so desired. Japan, Britain, the U.S.A. and many other powers had large sums invested in industries in China. The Japanese investments were taken over after the defeat of Japan. The United States investments were put under strict control as a reply to the freezing of the Chinese assets in the United States. But Britain still remained. Estimates have put the British investments in trade and industries in China as £200 million in 1930. Between this date and the war, there was considerably more investment. Today in terms of present value the investments must be worth much more than £350 million.

These British firms were ready and anxious to do business with China. They were administered by men who had been old 'China hands,' who had lived in the country for twenty years and knew it well. Many of them may have been contemptuous of the people of the country or suffered from a white-man's-burden complex, but they were businessmen anxious to seize a chance of making profits. Moreover they were powerful enough to make Britain maintain a friendly policy toward China.

The British had therefore remained behind in the hope that the Chinese would sooner or later realize the value and the need of doing business with them. They rightly believed that China needed many essentials, consumer goods, machinery, technical guidance and capital, and they were willing to supply them provided that they could hold their investments and were allowed to make legitimate profits. They therefore waited and hoped.

Perhaps the British were justified in their hope. The difficulties of the Chinese were apparent to anyone who knew even a little of the country. Realizing them, the new Government had accepted the capitalist as a necessary element in the society. Mao Tse-tung wrote: 'To develop industry enormous capital is required. Where will it come from? It can come from only two sources: the capital accumulated by the Chinese people themselves and from foreign loans, and we shall welcome all foreign investments as long as they

obey the laws of China and are advantageous to our economy.' He had again repeated this in *People's Democratic Dictatorship*: 'We want to do business. That is entirely correct. Business must certainly be done. We oppose only domestic and foreign reactionaries, who hinder our business transactions and we certainly do not oppose anyone else.' Even in 1951 Chou En-lai said in reply to my question, 'Of course we welcome very much any assistance from friendly countries.'

So the British industrialist remained, hoping to do business, but China has a long memory and carries the burden of the past. It may be difficult for an individual to forget the bitter humiliation heaped upon him by the arrogance of a superiority complex, but a nation conscious of its strength rises above such petty frustrations. The interests of the people demanded that China should utilize any agency which offered to give the technical help necessary for the rapid advancement of the standard of living of the people. The industrially developed Western Europe and the U.S.A. are the only countries who are in a position to give this assistance in far greater measure than Communist countries. Measures could be adopted which would prevent any interference in the policies of the Government. But to reject such help because it might lead to interference is to confess the weakness of the Government and the lack of faith in its capacity.

China is unable to make up her mind about the British. They offer her an open door to the Western storehouse but their past record in China has left an unhappy memory of domination and exploitation. And so, while many statements are made which give hope to the foreigner, in actual fact a policy of discrimination and vengeance for the past is slowly pushing the foreigner out of China. On the eve of the British Note asking for facilities for the British industrialists to withdraw from China, Nan Han-chen, the Governor of the People's Bank, replying to my question concerning existing foreign interests in the country, said, 'Existing foreign industrialists and traders may continue to operate in the country. We shall welcome foreign investments on the basis of mutual benefit and equality provided they work within the law.' The same reply was given to the British Note by the Vice Minister of Foreign

Affairs. These statements have little meaning, for the foreign interests in China, though they are working within the law, are gradually but inevitably being snuffed out.

The methods adopted to carry out the process have all the artistry of a cruel sadism which revels in watching the slow agony of a prolonged torture. The sense of property and the greed to make profits led the one-time oppressor to walk into the trap laid by the oppressed. The foreigners who once bled China white are now unable to leave their possessions and walk out. China feels that she is making them pay for the past.

Today many foreigners, including the British, want to leave their properties and come out, but unfortunately they cannot do so. I know that the owners of the world-famous Cathay Hotel wanted to abandon their property and hand it over to the Chinese. But their manager took more than two years to settle their liabilities and adjust their accounts with the Government before he could obtain a release and an exit permit. The managing director of a famous international tobacco company took almost a year to hand over the factory. He is still waiting for his exit permit. Meanwhile liabilities go on increasing as taxes have to be paid and labour which cannot be discharged has to be paid. At the same time personal responsibility to meet all such liabilities, including the responsibility for all illegal acts of junior or senior staff either in the present or at any time in the past, remains as a constant threat to personal security and freedom.

During my visit to Shanghai I met many foreign tycoons of industry and trade. They were old China hands, but since the revolution had not been able to leave the precincts of Shanghai. They therefore knew little of New China. In their utter isolation they received me as a breath of fresh air with eagerness and pleasure. I knew they were dependent upon the good offices of the Indian Embassy for many things, but they did not welcome me because of that. I was a journalist willing to listen and to speak of facts and not of fiction.

I visited them in their offices alone and unhampered. One of the industrialists confessed to me that he was surprised at the risk I was taking. He told me that a few weeks before, one of his own

countrymen, a Briton, who had been visiting China after attending the Moscow Economic Conference, had come to Shanghai. The newcomer had telephoned the business-man and made an appointment to meet him at lunch. When the business-man arrived the visiting countryman met him surrounded by Chinese officials and interpreters. After this they never met, though the visitor had promised to look him up. I knew the Chinese who were detailed to look after me did not like my going about. Every time I returned from some engagement I was asked where I had been. Nevertheless, I continued my visits to various business-men until my own Embassy thought it necessary to convey to me indirectly that I was embarrassing them by endangering my personal security!

While visiting a business-man in Shanghai I saw the fate of the private capitalist and especially the foreign capitalist painted large on the door of his office. A bloated exploiter wrapped in corruption and speculation was being gored by the bayonet of a triumphant worker. This was the picture he saw every time he entered his office and he could do nothing to remove the insult. I also realized that he had no messenger boys to take his orders and had to run after me to return me my coat, which in my hurry I had left in his office. Many daily insults added to the irksomeness of life.

But what I saw of foreign business in Shanghai convinced me that it was not a question of mutual benefit and equality or working within the law which would enable it to continue to operate. The Chinese were determined to take back the pound of flesh and then throw out the carcass. How this is being achieved is an interesting story, interesting because there appears to be no way of extricating the men involved in the mess.

The feeling of the 700 British remaining in China is that they can no longer hope to be able to carry on their trade or maintain their investments. The continuing world tension, the war in Korea and the policy of the Chinese Government convinced them that it was time to go. Many of them told me that discriminatory taxation, inability to rationalize and reduce costs and the diversion of trade from private hands to the State, together with a rigid policy of price control, had brought their industries into great difficulties. They had small finances left to meet the demands made on them. Their

financial liability was personal and, with no prospects of advances from banks on stocks, they faced a constant threat of imprisonment. I was surprised that men who had to pay 19*s*. in a pound should complain of taxation in China, where income tax was only 30 per cent maximum. 'But we have to pay this tax,' someone said to me, 'whether we make profits or no profits. And generally there are little or no profits.'

Foreign enterprises in China have not been permitted to carry out any revaluation of their assets and stocks and accordingly depreciation is still being calculated on book values as at August 31, 1949, despite the fact that HKS rate has risen since that date by 9·7 times. Foreign firms are therefore presumed to have made large profits and taxed at the maximum. A firm importing pianos was thus called upon to pay the tax though throughout the year it had not sold a single instrument or made any profit. Chinese firms, however, were allowed to revalue their assets in terms of the new exchange value. The taxes are collected immediately and a fine of 1 per cent per day is imposed for every day of default.

Many factories were unable to work all the year round due to the shortage of raw materials and yet they had to pay their labour for the whole period. Thus a factory which worked one week in four had been paying its labour the full four weeks' wages. Moreover the industry was not allowed to dispense with any surplus labour even though it might only be working part-time. In theory it was stated that labour could be discharged after agreement with the trade union on the payment of three months' wages; in practice the agreement was difficult and, even when it was possible, wages for one month for every year of service plus three months had to be paid. It seemed that the general insistence was that a firm must carry all its labour until it liquidates. Behind such policy there was no doubt the constantly growing problem of unemployment of industrial and agricultural labour. As a temporary solution such a policy of compelling industry to maintain its labour may be possible, but ultimately it forces the private industrialist to withdraw, as there are no prospects of profit left. The prospects in China, however, are much grimmer than the mere consideration of profits. The payment for raw materials, taxes, and the irreducible wage bill

have to be made forthwith while stocks of finished goods accumulate, locking up the liquid assets. Perhaps all these liabilities could have been met by such industries as the manufacture of textiles if they had been given time or if they could have obtained advances from the bank. But all such requests for advances have been refused by the People's Bank. Ultimately therefore the foreign firm has to bring in fresh capital from its country or the directors must face imprisonment, as the Chinese law imposes personal liability on the heads of a business house.

Jardine & Matheson represent almost a business empire in Old China. Their activities include shipping, wharfs and docks, textiles, engineering, brewery, etc. The brewery was working under a contract with the Chinese Government whereby its entire production was taken up by the authorities. In January this year, as a measure in the economy drive, the Government decided to reduce the consumption of beer, and reduced its purchases from the brewery. The result was that in March the company had 30,000 barrels of beer in stock, tying up a large amount of money. Mr Gordon, the managing director, had therefore no money to meet the company's liabilities, including wages. Gordon asked for an advance against millions of pound sterling worth of assets and stocks, but the bank refused to consider it. There was therefore no alternative except to send for money from London or to face imprisonment. Gordon refused to send for the money, as he argued that the Chinese would not permit him to remit such an advance to London when he was in a position to repay it.

The Chinese were therefore faced with the dilemma of either arresting him and destroying all future prospects of industrial and commercial co-operation with the foreign business-men in China or waiving the law. For twenty days they argued with Gordon. 'Surely, Mr Gordon, how can a firm like Jardines have no money? It is only a matter of a couple of thousand pounds, and you would not like us to put you in prison.' So for days persuasion and pressure were tried alternately, but to no avail. Ultimately the Chinese had to arrest Gordon. This was perhaps the last straw for the very patient British and they decided to leave China and their investments, worth more than £350 millions.

This last desperate comedy was played because for the past two years the British had been forced to bring in fresh capital to save the old investments. It was estimated that in 1951 the British firms in Shanghai brought in £6 million. In 1952 the intake had been reduced to £25,000 a month due to further decreases in production and demand. The arrest clearly showed that the Chinese policy towards foreign business houses was to squeeze them out and at the same time utilize their resources for her own purposes without any payment.

The patience of the British still in China was something remarkable. They went to their offices smartly dressed, played their week-end golf and patiently waited. They had ardent faith in themselves and firmly believed China needed their services much more today than ever before. They were prepared to adjust themselves to the altered circumstances. Soviet Russia, eager to industrialize herself, had done business with the United States and Britain even though they had intervened against the Bolsheviks after the World War I; so why not China? Is it because China has bitter memories of the past or are there other forces at work which control the future of the Chinese people?

PART TWO

12

THE NEW ECONOMY

According to Prime Minister Chou En-lai, the Chinese economy is composed of five parts under the leadership of the nationalized enterprises which are socialist in nature. It is defined as a composite economy under the leadership of the State-owned economy, in which the State 'shall co-ordinate and regulate' all the five sectors of economy 'in their spheres of operations, supply of raw materials, marketing, labour conditions, technical equipment, policies of public and general finance, etc.'

The five sectors are:

(1) Individual small-scale economy which includes family farms and all handicrafts.
(2) Private capitalist enterprise.
(3) State capitalist enterprise representing a combination of State and private capital.
(4) Co-operative enterprise.
(5) Nationalized enterprise. This sector represents the enterprises owned by foreign capitalists, *e.g.* Japanese and the bureaucratic capitalists who have been driven out. Thus about eighty per cent of heavy industry and thirty per cent of light industry has been nationalized.

The continued existence of private agriculture and industry is accepted as a necessity during the interim stage between transformation of feudal China into a purely Socialist China. Mao has written in *New Democracy*: 'The first stage is new democracy, the second is socialism. But the duration of the first stage will be rather long.' He developed this theory further in his lectures on the Chinese Revolution. He wrote: 'The task of the Chinese Revolution is to carry out national and democratic revolutions to

overthrow these two enemies (viz. imperialism and semi-feudalism), but the dagger of the revolution should not be directed against capitalism and the private property of the capitalists, but against imperialists and feudal monopolies.' Mao, describing the political and economic nature of the New Democratic Revolution, said, 'Economically it strives to nationalize all large capital interests, and all large enterprises of the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, to divide up the large estates and to distribute them among the peasantry, at the same time helping the middle and small private industries, while making no attempt to abolish the economy of rich farmers. Consequently while this new kind of democratic revolution clears the way for capitalism, yet in another sense it is also creating a precedent for socialism.'

Communist China appears to the visitor as a country of mixed economy, with vast sectors still under private ownership where a handsome profit is permitted. It is said that the State permits 15 per cent profit to the private capitalist and allows dividends up to 8 per cent to be declared by the joint stock companies. Apart from this 10 per cent of the profits must be taken into reserves, and of the balance 60 per cent may be given as bonus to shareholders etc. and 15 per cent utilized for workers' welfare. The example of Heng-yuan textile mills is given as having made large profits, while before the liberation this mill made great losses and had no capital left.

On the other hand, the British industrialists in China assert that there are no profits in industry. Even the textile mills which obtain good prices are only just able to break even, they contend, as the Government only pays them processing charges and earns the profits for itself. In cases where the Government permits them to sell directly, traders buy small quantities and stocks accumulate. The private trader has lost his market and the trade has gone into the hands of the Government or the co-operative shops. In every town that I visited I saw the Government department stores filled with people, while the other shops were deserted. Although the prices in the shops are fixed, the shopkeeper is willing to come and sell the same goods at the buyer's home at much reduced prices.

In other industries like tobacco firms, breweries, etc., the shortages of raw materials and the lack of demand, coupled with their

inability to reduce redundant labour, left little prospect for private enterprise. They too found the Government the only supplier of raw materials and buyer of finished products. Many who had returned from Hongkong after the revolution, thinking that private trade could prosper under the new regime, find themselves disillusioned. There is no new investment from private sources.

The Hengyuan Mills had decided to erect another textile mill in Sian out of their reserves. A building was erected and machinery was purchased, but the management was unable to get any technicians or workers in Sian. If these were transported from the industrial coastal region, their wages would be much higher. The owner therefore went to the Economic and Finance Commission and explained his difficulties. The Commission then decided to take over the Sian plant.

This was a direct result of the land reform. The peasant was unwilling to give up his land and become a wage labourer. It was otherwise in the coastal area where the per capita holding of land was only 1·7 *mows*. In fact there was a constant danger of unemployment, and the Government compelled the employer to retain all his workers even when there was no work for them. In Shanghai offices and banks I saw hundreds of employees just doing nothing at the expense of their employers. Private shops and businesses were at a standstill, while Government shops were crowded to capacity.

Meanwhile State trading has expanded rapidly. An overwhelming proportion of imports and exports is handled by the State. From forty to a hundred per cent of the wholesale trade in foodgrains, coal, cotton goods, salt, sugar, iron, steel, timber and cement is in the hands of the State trading companies. Some thirty per cent of retail trade is also in the hands of the State and the co-operatives. Most of the large factories have signed long-term contracts to sell their entire production to the State.

The Chinese economy is thus not really a mixed economy, but an economy in which the State regulates and controls private enterprise at key points so as to make it subservient to the purposes of the State. By allocation of output and raw materials, controls on cash and credit holdings, industrial and trade taxes and regulated

distribution of profits, private enterprise is reduced to a mere feeder or a contractor to State enterprise.

To improve the standard of living of her people, China has announced a Five Year Plan, under which, it is said, heavy industries will be developed and agriculture mechanized. But what little I saw in the country seems sufficient evidence that she has neither the technical resources nor the capital savings for its realization without considerable foreign assistance. China's problem requires that she maintain the people's living standards, which are now in a majority of cases on a below-subsistence level, while simultaneously providing employment, capital, know-how and, above all, a willingness on the people's part to bear further heavy sacrifices. Though a dictatorship is capable of imposing heavy burdens on the people, it must still assure them some benefits in their daily life and a reasonable improvement in their standard of living. Thus they hear fulsome announcements of miraculous achievements; and it has been necessary to create an enemy to divert their attention from hardships within. Only a free people, freely prepared to bear the sacrifices of the present, can build for the future with true co-operation.

In the underdeveloped countries of Asia the State has not been able to compel its people to suffer further privations merely in the hope of a better future. Unless these countries are willing to pool their resources in order to minimize the sufferings of their people, and co-operate willingly with each other in peace and friendship, there can be no development or economic betterment of the masses. Asian countries urgently need foreign assistance, for they have little savings or equipment.

Communist China, however, has chosen to tread another path. For the time being, the dictatorship can finance the vast administration, the large standing army and partially reconstruct the shattered economy by imposing the burdens of deficit financing, and taxing the capacities of its people to the limit. But cheap conscript labour can build only earthworks on the Huai. It cannot relieve the pressure of population on the land, solve the problem of a peasantry fearfully guarding its small-holdings, or provide for employment and industrial development.

PART TWO

13

INDUSTRIALIZATION

'Unquestionably, in constructing New China, industrialization is our goal and we are exerting every effort to attain this goal': Mr Chen Yun, the Chairman of the Committee of Financial and Economic Affairs.

'It will in effect take three to five years to revive the economy in China before it can be developed systematically. Within this period, we should concentrate our strength on the development of several key-points which will facilitate the preparation of essential conditions for industrialization such as capital, the home market and the technique': Chou En-lai.

These were the reports submitted to the National Committee of the PPCC in September, 1950. I visited Chinese industrial plants in 1951 and 1952 and so was able to see for myself what these efforts were and to what extent the promises held out have been fulfilled. China must industrialize if the poverty of her millions is to be removed. But she faces immense difficulties, many of which are today common to all underdeveloped countries. Many others are of her own making or imposed upon her by the world conflict.

China, however, claims to have overcome some of the difficulties and asserts that she has made phenomenal progress both in industrial production and in techniques. At a recent industrial exhibition in India, the Chinese Pavilion exhibited machine tools and other products which impressed many visitors. Chinese newspapers and magazines announce hundreds of 'inventions' made by her workers. Chinese leaders hand out statistics of great increases in industrial production to impress their people and assure them that prosperity is not far away. Unfortunately these statistics tell

nothing because they are mere percentage increases over 1949, 1950 and so on.

China was once the dumping ground of the world. During the inflationary period these goods assumed the status of currency and large-scale hoarding increased the scarcity. Today, these stocks supply the vital needs of the people as other sources of supply are denied. Shops in big cities are full of goods which were manufactured five to ten years ago. Many of the medicines and drugs are old and perhaps useless. Local manufactures like cigarettes, soap, cloth, etc., are in plenty but their prices are high in an obvious effort to force economies in their consumption.

The stability of Chinese economy depends upon her ability to meet the essential requirements of the people. The restoration of Agriculture and the retention of a larger share of the produce by the peasant has created an increased demand for the manufactured goods. These demands must be met either by production or by imports. Mr Chen Yun, whom I have quoted above, estimates the industrial potential in his 1950 report: 'The few modern industries we have, constituting only ten per cent of our national economy, are in a very weak and unstable condition.' The blockade therefore tends to create an instability of price economy unless it is countered by significant increases in production.

China, like India, is an underdeveloped country. Her industries form a very small part of the nation's economy. Many of these industries were owned and managed by the foreign industrialists who had settled in Shanghai, Tientsin, Canton and Manchuria. With their eviction, China is faced with yet another problem in finding the technical skill and managerial ability to run and maintain her limited industries.

It is often forgotten that the reintegration of Manchuria into China has been a vital gain to Chinese industry. During the occupation years Japan had increased her investments from 1,700 million *yens* to 4,800 million. These investments covered many spheres of economic activity and developed the natural resources of the country. Coal, iron and steel, copper, zinc, gold and oil provided the nucleus for a vast industrial development, while power was supplied from the hydro-electric project across the Korean border

on the Yalu River. Along with these, a machine tool industry at Anshan and Mukden, textiles and the manufacture of small electrical equipment were also developed. Manchuria's economic wealth is vital to the industrial future of China. For pointing this out in the thirties, the Nankai University at Tientsin was bombed out of existence by the Japanese.

I therefore welcomed the opportunity to visit Manchuria. At the end of the War, news agencies in India had given long accounts of how the Russians had occupied the area and robbed the industrial plants of all their machinery. In Peking I had learnt that it was the Kuomintang reactionaries and not the Russians who had been the vandals. The 'Russians took some machinery, but they returned it all,' one high dignitary told me. Another had told me that most of the machinery had been returned by the Russians. The more I questioned, the more I realized the gradualness of truth under Communism. It is a long and irksome road but I had time and patience. I learnt from one of the few technical experts China has that many of the industrial plants were denuded by the Russians and the vandalism of the Kuomintang troops only added to the sorry plight in which they are found today.

The railway journey across China offered the prospect of learning something about China. Peking was Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai and a score of other party bosses. China was a continent lacking the modern apparatus of a state and united only by the traditional code of living. A dictatorship, on the other hand, needs a vast, unified and all-pervasive administration. The strength of Peking depended upon what machine it had been able to set up in the short time it had had.

The visit to the industrial North-east commenced with the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition in Mukden. The exhibition was concerned only with products of the North-east and a wide range of industrial equipment and consumer goods were shown in it. All kinds of steel, machine tools including precision lathes, turbines, generators, electric motors, cables, light and heavy chemicals, synthetic petrol and petrol products, glassware and pottery, textiles, in fact everything was there. In many cases small models of the industrial plant showing various processes were

shown. The exhibition was technically perfect and worked out with meticulous care to educate the visitor and make him industrially minded. At every stall there were young boys and girls who reeled off an explanation about the exhibits, though they hardly understood what they said. Busloads of people were brought from the country districts to see this exhibition and they went away much impressed. So were many of the Asian visitors, for they had never been inside an ordinary modern factory. They had little idea of what technical skill and experienced craftsmen are needed to carry out even simple operations. If they had they would have realized that none of the wonderful machines exhibited could have been produced in China. This exhibition was no different from other Communist propaganda; perfect in detail, complete in its execution, and capable in its understanding of the human weakness of believing what it cannot comprehend.

Our programme included a lead and copper smelting plant and another factory manufacturing mining machinery and locomotive wheels. These factories were managed by party members whose old loyalty cards since the days of Yenan entitled them to benefit of power. There were no experts or technicians on the staff. For all such guidance they referred their problems to the various bureaux at Mukden, which were manned by Russian experts. When such reference was made, the Soviet experts visited the plant and gave the necessary advice and guidance. An interesting fact was that, when a worker was elected a 'model worker,' he became classified as a 'technician.' These 'technicians' were present when visitors came to the plant. They received higher wages and many other privileges which acted as moral incentives to the other workers. In one of the plants, it was admitted that all the skilled workers during the Japanese occupation had been Japanese and now they had overcome the need for skill by the adoption of safety measures and health protection schemes!

It was evident that much of the work was carried out by manual labour. Large parts of the mining machinery plant with its big workshops were empty shells. In one large workshop stood only a broken overhead crane, in another a few workers were learning how to hammer a square rod of iron with the help of a pneumatic

hammer, in a third, locomotive wheels were being cast with manual labour, and so on. Only in one workshop were there some lathes, cutters, planers and the rest. I failed to understand the purpose of this plant working now, except to employ labour and train it gradually for the day when equipment would be available. Cost in Communist economy is of no consequence, it is the value it gives in propaganda which matters. I had learnt at the Exhibition that China manufactured mining machinery, I was in the plant which claimed to do so, but there was not one finished machine anywhere. I asked to be shown a unit in the process of being assembled. I was told that no sooner was a machine ready than it was immediately despatched as 'our needs are so urgent.' The lead and copper smelting plant was in a little better condition, but much of its work was carried on by manual labour and the factory lacked planning and expert guidance.

It was difficult to see why we were being taken round these plants unless it was to impress on us that China was carrying on against all difficulties. A large number of workers were being employed under factory conditions and an attempt was being made to train them through lectures, practical experience and some guidance from slightly better equipped workers, so that when capital goods became available they would be able to handle the machine with some degree of proficiency. Meanwhile the essential needs of the country were being met by some production.

I was impressed with the determination to overcome all odds, but I wondered if these difficulties would not have been easier to overcome had there been a more realistic approach to international understanding. Or was it that the circumstances had left no alternative but to rely on Soviet Russia for the means of improving the conditions of the Chinese People? There is no doubt that Soviet Russia was fully exploiting the hopeless position of China for her own benefit.

On my second visit to Mukden eight months later I was hoping to see some progress in industrial equipment and efficiency. Russia and Eastern Europe could supply many of the essential needs in capital goods. Besides, Russia had given China sixty million dollars a year under the Sino-Soviet Agreement, for five years as a

loan at one per cent interest to be used in 'payment for deliveries from the U.S.S.R. of equipment and materials including equipment for electric power stations, metallurgical and engineering plants, mining equipment for extraction of coal and ores, railway and other transport equipment, rails and other materials for the restoration and development of the national economy of China.'

If the agreement had any real significance China must be receiving vital assistance for the reconstruction of her shattered industry. I did not, however, expect any large-scale aid, for I had heard in Peking from a reliable source that China was unable to get any equipment and that the little she had been able to buy was from Eastern Europe on long deliveries.

I was therefore interested when the programme at Mukden the second time included a visit to a locomotive factory and a machine-tool plant. But, as on the previous occasion, the visit commenced with a day at the industrial exhibition and the locomotive factory was forgotten. When we repeatedly expressed our desire to see something of Manchurian industry, we were told that a visit to a coal mine was being arranged in place of the locomotive factory. We were told that the factory actually did not build locomotives but repaired rail coaches and manufactured loco wheels. I remembered the plant I had seen on the previous visit and appreciated the Chinese concern not to take visitors there again.

However, the visits to the coal mine and the shale oil refinery were interesting from more points of view than one. Before the Sino-Japanese War China used to export coal to Japan. Today there are no such exports and coal is an important item in any policy of price stabilization. If China could restart coal production and bring it back to its pre-war level, it would not only help exports but also provide the necessary fuel for her industries. I have read in the June issue of the *China Monthly Review* that the coal output of the Tatung Colliery was 284 per cent higher in 1951 than in 1950. I knew it meant little, for I had watched the few mules carrying small chunks of coal on the road from the mines at Tatung. I was therefore happy at the opportunity to see the great coalfield at Fushun.

The drive to Fushun from Mukden lies along an undulating

countryside dotted with the smoke-belching chimneys of Japan's industrial enterprises in Manchuria. Fushun itself is like Mukden, an entirely Westernized but Japanese city. Its broad avenues look grey with coal dust while the residential area has all the amenities, including a race-course. We were taken to the famous Ling Fung mines, made to wear cotton pads over our mouths and marched to the pithead. We then watched an occasional truck coming up from the bottom bringing up some coal. We saw nothing of the coal pit. Hence it was hardly possible to estimate how the mines were being worked and how the production had gone up four times on the 'before liberation' production as it was claimed. One must accept it or simply be content to learn that ten thousand workers were employed and housed with many benefits. Many of the visitors had seen enough and returned back to Mukden.

Later in the day the few of us remaining at Fushun went to see the open coal pit. This was a magnificent sight. The pit was almost a small canyon, 7,000 metres long, 300 to 1,200 metres wide and 170 metres deep. The coal seams here were 80 to 90 metres deep. Above the coal was shale. 20,000 workers were employed here but the coal was soft coal. On the edge of the pit stands the shale oil refinery, a vital defence industry. Unlike any other plant which I have visited in the North-east, this refinery was working to its full capacity. Ninety per cent of this plant, according to the information supplied, had been reconstructed by the Government of New China, and production restored to its pre-war level.

One more industrial plant was on our schedule. It was a machine-tool factory manufacturing lathes and cutters. They were simple machines and did not require a high degree of skill. Here for the first time I saw a few machines imported from Russia. It was, however, amusing to see that the name plates on all these precision machines had been changed into Chinese except on one of them. Perhaps this was an oversight. But it explained to me the Chinese 'origin' of the many things I had seen in the Exhibition. When, however, I inquired where such precision machines were manufactured, I was told that I would have to go to the Anshan Machine Tools Co., which unfortunately was not on the schedule. Again I was foiled.

My estimate of Chinese know-how was confirmed by what I saw in the office of the above plant. There were two wooden models of the lathe and the cutter on show here. These models had been carried in the May Day parade at Peking by the model workers of the plant who had been sent to Peking for the occasion. Such honour is given only to the latest achievements of industry. I had seen a model Jeep manufactured in China at the October 1st parade last year.

The case of the textile industry is quite different. British industrialists in Shanghai admitted that the Chinese had the necessary skill and managerial ability to carry it on efficiently. Most of the textile mills are situated inside the Great Wall and particularly at Shanghai. Many of them, like many other light industries, are in the hands of private capitalists. There are British interests also. But they are all under the control of the Government organization called The China Cotton Yarn and Cloth Company. Under this control, the Government supplies the cotton and takes the finished product on payment of certain processing charges. As the product is standardized, there is not much room for initiative or profit. I visited a textile mill owned and managed by a private industrialist in Tientsin and another belonging to the State in Shanghai.

Cloth is, second only to food, a vital necessity for the underclothed millions in China. Adequate supplies are essential to maintain the economic stability. It forms an important item in the Parity Deposit Unit by which public confidence is maintained in the currency. Textile industry therefore forms an important sector of China's reconstruction plans. China claims today that she is self-sufficient in her cloth requirements and the peasant is buying more cloth than ever before. Food and cloth are cited as examples of the prosperity of her masses. Mr Peng Chen, the mayor of Peking, had claimed that the peasant who was buying only 10·8 feet of cloth per person in 1949 was now buying 24 feet of cloth as a result of his increased purchasing power due to Land Reform.*

In a peasant's home in the village of Kao Kang in the North-east, the peasant had proudly told the visitors that before the 'liberation' he had only one patched and torn suit of clothes. Today he had five

* The current official figures are 16 yards per person.

new suits! It had meant to many of us a visible sign of economic and psychological satisfaction of the teeming population of China. We could understand the peasant who had known hunger and shame being willing to give his life now for the Government which had given him a new sense of security.

But China had been short of cotton. She had imported large quantities of cloth in the past from Japan. India used to export cotton to supply her industry. China has no more than five million spindles and in 1951 many of the textile mills had suspended manufacture for one and a half months due to shortage of cotton. If all the spindles had worked all the year round, I knew they could not manufacture more than 2,000 million yards of cloth. And now there were no imports of cloth. It is therefore quite clear that with all the improvements in efficiency claimed to have been obtained by the Chinese textile workers, China cannot produce enough cloth to meet the essential needs of her people. With her much-vaunted efficiency, China's output per man is only equal – if not actually inferior – to the output of the Indian worker. Lack of imports, leaving her own production as the only source of supply, has led to standardization of cloth, high prices and scarcity. A yard of ordinary cloth costs three shillings.

I had seen the young officials who looked after us wear day after day the same blue cotton suit unwashed and unironed, for their salaries, which are paid in goods, gave them nothing more than one cotton suit a year. How then was China meeting her cloth requirements?

Mr Pien Shih-ching, the managing director of Hengyuan Textile Mill at Tientsin, is a private capitalist and owner of a model industrial enterprise. When he received me in October, 1951, he had already achieved the distinction of being a progressive capitalist who knew long before others what was wise. In 1950 he had experienced the shortage of cotton and difficulties of obtaining supplies as a private individual. He therefore went to the Government CCYCC and offered to enter into a two years' contract to deliver all the cloth he manufactured, if the Government would supply him with cotton and pay him only the processing charges. The Government accepted the offer and took over the liability to

pay the commodity tax on yarn and cloth which comes to about seventeen per cent of the value of the cloth. The arrangements worked satisfactorily for Mr Shih-ching, for the company paid a seven and a half per cent dividend to its shareholders and retained about ten billion *yuans* (£160,000) as undivided profit. As a model industrialist Mr Shih-ching also obtained ideal labour relations.

As usual the trade union leaders and model workers were all there when we arrived at the Hengyuan Mill, but we received no report on how the industry was being worked. Mr Shih-ching wanted no speeches and would much rather answer our questions. He knew his job and was quite content to take us around unless we wanted any specific information. It was a change from other visits and when I asked for production details he did not evade the answer. It was evident that he had managed to keep his working-class masters quite pleased. He gushed over me when he learnt that I too belonged to the national capitalist class in India.

When I returned to Tientsin, the Anti-Five Campaign was just in its last stages. I was anxious to see Mr Shih-ching but the request to visit the Hengyuan Mill went unheeded. Perhaps the model industrialist had disappeared in the holocaust.

The pattern of the contract worked out by the Tientsin textile mill was, however, an exception. The processing charges paid to other mills in Shanghai left little profits for the industrialists. The British industrialists told me that due to Commodity, Business and Stamp taxes they had hardly any profits left, though the CCYCC, who took over the cloth, was making large profits from the sales. In any case, it was admitted all round that Textiles was the only industry which had any prospects in the present-day set-up. It was able to work most of the year and could at least make both ends meet.

I also visited a fertilizer plant near Nanking managed by Dr Howe, a world-renowned technical expert. He has lived many years in the United States, and is today the Technical Director of the Yung-ling Chemicals as well as adviser to the Government. There are plans for the expansion of the chemical industry and while I was in Nanking the manager of the plant left for Eastern Europe to obtain machinery.

Mr Chen Han-seng writes in *China Reconstructs*: 'The iron and steel industry was ninety per cent destroyed between 1937 and 1949. Electric power capacity was fifty per cent destroyed during the same period. Moreover the Japanese surrender practically denuded China's North-east, where most of the industry is located, of its technicians.' Textile manufacture perhaps was the least damaged during the war years but the statistics of its production throw an interesting sidelight on the use of statistics in Communist China. The same source reports that the total yarn production in 1950 was 0·28 per cent higher than in 1930. This figure of course does not take into consideration the increase in production during 1930–1939, when there was a marked increase in the number of spindles installed in China. In any case a little later Mr Han-seng writes: 'Compared to 1949 yarn production increased 39·39 per cent in 1950.'

In Shanghai I talked to many other industrialists, mostly foreign. My impression that many plants had to remain idle three weeks in a month because raw materials were short or because there was little demand was confirmed. The big tobacco plant of the Imperial Tobacco Company worked at one-third of its capacity, and yet the Chinese are known to be heavy smokers! There were barrels of beer lying unsold at EWO breweries, and many Chinese drink beer for preference rather than rice wine.

It would therefore not be incorrect to conclude that though during the last three years China has made efforts to revive and restore her industry, shortages both of capital goods and of raw materials have prevented any sizable growth. In many cases, therefore, she has been compelled to take up handicraft production to meet her immediate and pressing needs. Meanwhile by austerity living and extremely high prices for out-dated goods she has held in check all demands.

She is today utilizing the little equipment she has to train her labour and make the people machine-minded. I saw this vividly at yet another industrial exhibition in Tientsin.

This exhibition was a fine example of how to educate the people and make them feel that China was accomplishing what had never been attempted before. By a series of simple posters every activity

of the people was directed into the set purposes of the State. Agriculture, industry, education, health, art and culture – all were illustrated to show the aims and achievements of New China. Among the exhibits was a motor car which the Communist zeal of the Chinese workers had helped to manufacture! Here was a solid achievement of the workers' state attained without equipment or know-how! Whether that car will ever be able to travel along the road is a different matter, but it had under its bonnet an internal combustion engine.

It is not enough to pour out figures of percentage increases. Occasionally the people must be shown a life-size model; then it may be necessary to put it in the exhibition with a live engine in it. Then at least people will believe what was before only an imagination for them. Such is the vital force of propaganda. I saw it among some of my colleagues who came back and told India that China manufactures motor cars, synthetic petrol, and all those things that a poor Asian imagines will be within his reach some day.

PART TWO

14

INFLATION AND FINANCE

At the end of the war, the Chinese economy found itself in complete ruin. Many of her industries were shattered and the machinery removed as in Manchuria. Railways were at a standstill and the rolling stock was in poor condition. Agriculture too was disorganized and wide areas suffered from famines while farmers hoarded foodgrains. The financial disorder added to the distress of the people, who did not know from day to day the value of the money they held. Prices changed from hour to hour, leaving little alternative but to convert whatever money one had into goods. People had no confidence in the currency and so trade was almost paralysed. It is estimated that in 1949 the national currency controlled only 1/40th of the trade, while gold and foreign currencies became the only means of exchange. Meanwhile the Kuomintang went on printing currency notes until prices had little relation to the money in circulation but depended upon the confidence, or rather the lack of it, of the people. In 1949 the currency in circulation was 176·8 billion times the currency in circulation before the war and the price index was 13884·2 billion times. This meant that, if a person had 10,000 Chinese dollars before the war, in 1949 he could not buy a matchstick with the money.

This state of affairs had so affected production that it was reduced by more than thirty per cent in agriculture and by fifty per cent in industry. No state could continue in this chaos. It is to the credit of the Communist regime that it effectively handled the situation and brought back order and confidence into the economic life of the people within a short period. Much of the present popularity of the Government among the small traders and the business and industrial community is based on this return to security. Today

prices are fairly stable and, though due to economic unbalance the tendency towards inflation persists, the people feel confident and secure.

The process of deflation was carried out in three months, March–June, 1950, and the clogged channels of economic life were restored to make the transition from a war-time economy to peace-time reconstruction possible. Perhaps such quick results are possible only in a totalitarian economy, but the effectiveness with which they were carried out shows the administrative capacity of the new regime. Three things were necessary to restore the currency to its normal function. First the budget revenue and expenditure must be brought under control and balanced. Secondly the people must be assured that the money in their possession would retain its exchange value and finally prices must be controlled so as to maintain this confidence.

To achieve the first aim, the State finances had to be put in order. All revenue was centralized and its expenditure was henceforward controlled by the centralized government. Peasants were asked to pay their land tax in foodgrains and cotton. Industry was ordered to keep on working and the Government undertook to take over their produce. Railways were also opened up again under a determined policy that 'where the troops go the railway goes.' All these reforms led to a great increase in the revenues of the State. On the other hand expenditure was drastically controlled. Many employees in the Government receive no pay. They work on a supply basis, and are given lodging, board with the minimum rations and clothing. The military expenditure was separated from the civil and it is claimed that the army has been put on a self-supporting basis. Nan Han-chen, the Chairman of the People's Bank, claimed that by these measures the deficit was reduced to such an extent that one hundred million dollar bonds issued that year covered all needs. These bonds were issued at a fixed value in terms of commodities or silver dollars.

The second was achieved by the creation of 'parity deposit units.' Government organizations and enterprises, schools, armed forces, etc., were ordered not to keep more money in cash than what they needed for their expenses for three days. People were asked to

deposit their surplus funds in the banks on an understanding that the money so deposited will be calculated in terms of so many units, the value of which will be guaranteed to them whatever the prices. The PDU so calculated included rice, cloth, oil and coal (household). Circulation of gold was declared illegal and people were asked to surrender it to the banks, which bought it at an arbitrarily low price. Foreign currencies were similarly withdrawn, and paid for at a rate of exchange which had no relation to actual prices. The last two sources provided the State with foreign currencies to pay for its imports. China's 800 private banks were put under the administrative control of the People's Bank to prevent speculation in currency and trade.

Finally, prices were brought under control by putting trade in foodgrains, cloth, coal and items of daily necessities under a central authority. The Government itself accumulated stocks and sold them at fixed prices through Government shops. Food was the main problem, as other necessities which had hitherto been hoarded came out with the return of confidence. The Government, however, received large quantities of foodgrains in the shape of land tax. These receipts were enough to feed forty-five million people for the whole year, while the demand in the urban and famine area that year required foodgrains enough to feed about eighty million people. The Government therefore bought foodgrains from the market and also collected tax for 1949 as well as for 1950 during the year. There was enough coal in the country because there were no exports of coal and what was mined, it is claimed, was sufficient to meet the home needs.

Nan Han-chen, managing director of the People's Bank, describing the success of his policy, said, 'We have now no hoarding and no scarcity of commodities. By preventing the dumping and the imports of foodgrains and cloth which we do not need, we have given an impetus to industrial and agricultural production in the country by widening the markets for them. Hence the volume of trade has increased and along with it the number of notes in circulation also increased. We have balanced our budget. We have enough foreign exchange. And we have stabilized our prices. But a new problem has arisen now. Shops have large stocks of goods

which were hoarded before and are not able to sell much. There is therefore not much demand on industry, which is faced with the prospect of closing down. Last year the banks came forward and financed industry and trade by purchasing goods from the market, placing orders with industry and commissioning it to do processing work. Besides the Government purchased all goods which could not be sold. The stocks of these goods will be used to maintain prices when the previously hoarded goods are exhausted. We shall thus maintain a stable economy.

'For the last year and more,' he continued, 'we have maintained financial and price stability. Sometimes there may have been isolated cases of short supply, but we have tried to remedy it. We have reorganized and restored the productive capacities of our industries which are useful to the economy of the country and serve the people. We have undertaken vast irrigation projects like the Huai River project and reduced the area chronically affected by famines from 20 million acres to about 7 million acres. We still have a certain disparity between agricultural and industrial prices which we cannot eliminate in such a short period, but we shall overcome it by rapid industrialization.'

This was indeed an impressive record as narrated to the visitors in October, 1951. Primarily the basic need was to gain the trust of the people in the national currency and prohibit the use of foreign currencies and gold as a means of exchange. The institution of the Parity Deposit Unit linked the currency to four essential commodities, prices of which the Government controlled by controlling their consumption as well as their production and distribution. The Government's willingness to accept the payment of land tax in kind and the fixing of wages in terms of rice or millet or kaolian assured the peasantry and the workers of a fixed standard of living, even though this standard might be very low. Any improvement in it depended upon increased production and not upon income. The prices of other commodities depended upon the availability of these commodities and the surplus money in the hands of the people.

Political stability was one of the important factors in gaining the confidence of the people. The inflation had continued in spite of all

attempts to check it. But when Mao returned from Moscow with the Sino-Soviet Alliance in February, 1950, it had immediate effect on the currency. The New Democracy was henceforward firmly in the saddle and only a world war could shake its future. Gold and foreign currencies which had been hoarded were now surrendered to the People's Bank at low prices and the Government was able to carry out its financial policy.

But the halt in prices was only temporary. China, like other dictatorships, lives by printing currency. To maintain a vast army of five million, to finance long-term projects out of revenue and to maintain the vast machinery of administration which a totalitarian regime involves, all these are too great a burden on the limited resources of an underdeveloped country. Though actual figures of the budget are not available, the revenue cannot be sufficient for the calls made on it. There is also other evidence available which indicates that more currency is being put into circulation. There has been an unmistakable rise in prices during 1950–51 and, though the Chinese Government only admit a rise of thirteen per cent in agricultural prices and nineteen per cent in industrial commodities, the actual rise may be forty per cent, as stated by a high official, or as much as a hundred per cent, as private interests contend.

All wages and fixed salaries in China are in terms of rice or millet, though they are paid in cash on the basis of the price on the day of payment. Hence any increase in prices only affects the consumption of other commodities and not of the foodgrains. The increase in the prices of foodgrains indicates a lowering of the value of currency as it does not attempt to adjust demand to supplies. *People's China*, in trying to explain away this fact, writes rather naïvely, 'The prices of some industrial commodities were bound to rise slightly owing to the fact that the purchasing power of the masses and particularly of the peasants has been increasing steadily, while the output of industrial goods has not yet caught up with the people's needs. Such a phenomenon is only a natural process of economic reconstruction. The 13·8 per cent rise in commodity prices last year is therefore actually a reflection of the rising purchasing power of the people.'

It may be contended that there has been an increase in wages of the workers and that this represented an increased purchasing power in their hands. But similar increases in production are also claimed and consequently the increased demand could have been met from the available supplies and there was no need for rise in prices. It must therefore be only the needs of the budget for cash currency which depreciate the value of money. Such a phenomenon is natural in deficit financing.

I believe the national budget is not balanced, but the huge military expenditure and the cost of national projects can all be met by the simple device of printing notes so long as the power of the State operates to control rigidly the life of the people. The currency is not based on the value of commodities or any other factor, but only on the decree of the State.

Apart from the price adjustment, the State regulates the currency in the hands of the people by periodic demands for contributions which are voluntary in name only. Within the last three years China has witnessed three such 'voluntary' campaigns. First was the Hundred million dollar Bonds, which was followed by the 'Aid Korea Resist America' campaign, together with the Fighter Planes Fund, and finally, early in 1952, the San Fan Wu Fan. All these campaigns extorted large funds from the people which would have otherwise come on the market and pushed up the prices. They are therefore economic necessities apart from their political value.

I met Nan Han-chen in May. I had expressed my desire to interview him through the Liaison Bureau for Foreign Correspondents. I was then asked – as usual – to submit my questions in writing for his consideration. I waited – as usual – for many days and at last one day late in the afternoon I was called to his office. His replies were masterly in the art of evasion and, though I tried to put simple economic propositions for elucidation, conveying my meaning in simple terms which I am sure he understood, he persisted in misinterpreting their intention. I cannot blame the interpreter, who, if I recollect correctly, was a Professor of Economics and spoke good English. His answers, however, in spite of their evasiveness, throw an interesting light on Chinese economy. I

therefore give the whole interview as far as possible in his own words.

QUESTION. What are the sources of State revenues? Is land tax the major source?

ANSWER. Our main sources of revenue are (1) Customs commodity tax, business turnover tax, income tax (maximum thirty per cent) and sales tax, (2) Income from State operated industry, (3) Land revenue, thirteen per cent of gross production. The land revenue is thus not our major source.

QUESTION. Are any loans issued to meet the budget deficit or revenue expenditure?

ANSWER. Since Liberation we have issued only one loan – Hundred million dollar Bonds. We have issued no more loans. The Bond issue was meant more for the purpose of contracting the currency in circulation than for revenue to meet a budget deficit. We balanced our budget last year, this year we hope there will be a surplus.

QUESTION. How does the State finance such long-term projects as the Huai River project? Would not it be better to finance such projects from loans instead of from revenue, thus imposing burdens on the present generation?

ANSWER. We finance such projects from our revenues. In two years we have spent more on irrigation projects than what Kuomintang did in its whole period.

QUESTION. Is there sufficient capital saving in the country to meet the needs of capital investment for industrial and agricultural development or does China need friendly foreign capital assistance? If so, what is the policy of the Chinese Government regarding protection to such foreign investments?

ANSWER. Yes, we have sufficient savings in the country. By spending our budget surpluses on development projects we are constantly increasing our production and thus provide for further investments. Further, we are planning to mechanize agriculture, which will release labour for industrial development. Our capital accumulation comes from private savings, budget surplus and favourable trade balance. We had a budget deficit in 1950 but we balanced our

budget last year. This year too we hope to balance. We had a favourable trade balance in 1950, we balanced our trade last year and hope to do so this year also.

This answer conveyed nothing. Since there was neither a budget surplus or trade surplus, it was futile to suggest there were savings accumulated from these sources. Private savings too were non-existent for both the agriculturalist and other wage-earners lived on the barest level of subsistence and, though they might be receiving more cash, the increased prices off-set any improvement, as stated in the passage from *People's China* quoted above. China's capital needs can be met only to some extent from printing new currency and from cheap labour, as on the Huai River project. There is no other source. But to continue with Mr Nan Han-chen:

ANSWER. We shall welcome foreign investments on a basis of mutual benefit and equality, provided the foreigners are prepared to work within the law.
QUESTION. Is there any definite policy towards the existing foreign investments? Would China prefer to take them over?
ANSWER. Existing foreign investments may continue to operate provided they work within the law.
QUESTION. Is there a national budget? Is it possible to obtain any publication which would give some idea of the budget?
ANSWER. Our finances are rigidly handled by the central Government. All plans are strictly carried out and operated. All revenues are received by the Central Authority and the Central Authority allocates them to the provinces according to the plans to be carried out by them.
QUESTION. In view of the fact that the Chinese economy is unbalanced because of certain increases in Agricultural production, while there is a scarcity of industrial goods, is there any tendency towards inflation? Is this inflation controlled by price control?
ANSWER. Inflation is only historical. We stopped it in 1950 and there will be no more inflation. There is no need to control inflation by controlling prices. We do not issue more currency and we have enough stocks of commodities.

I reminded him of what he had said to me the year before when describing the measures to check the inflation which New China had inherited from the Kuomintang. I told him that if the PDU was based on the prices of the four commodities, it was necessary to maintain the price of the PDU and that the Government in fact did purchase these commodities and utilized their stocks to maintain their prices. It was, I said, something like a commodity standard. Nan Han-chen replied:

'Prices are determined by supply and demand in the open market, and not by price control. We admit there is disparity between agricultural and industrial production, but we do not need price control. We purchase farm produce so that the farmer may not suffer. We do use Government stocks to keep prices within certain limits in the interest of the consumer and producer.'

I was amazed at this denial. So many official statements have openly declared that prices were rigidly controlled and even indirectly Nan Han-chen had admitted it. Perhaps the smile which escaped me irritated him and my persistent questioning might have convinced him that I was hostile. He was therefore a little abrupt with me but I was determined to continue my questioning. Unfortunately my opportunity to ask for explanations was limited, as I was bound by the written questions which I had to send ahead of me. Nan Han-chen was determined to avoid giving me a clear answer.

QUESTION. What is the basis of your currency? Is it linked to the four commodities included in the PDU or the total production in the country?
ANSWER. Our currency is not linked to any commodities. In fact we have three times more commodities in stock than currency in circulation.

There was no way to tell him that he was not talking economics.

QUESTION. Do such subscriptions as the Aid Korea Fund have any effect on the surplus purchasing power in the hands of the peasantry which could lead to inflation?

ANSWER. Voluntary contributions are based on patriotic appeal. The burdens are shared equally by the urban and the rural population. There is a contraction of currency but at the same time production is increased.

It was difficult to understand the answer. Nan Han-chen understood that I was seeking to prove the need to contract currency by means of these contributions. He could not deny it but he wanted to make out that such contributions came from production which was increased by 'patriotic pacts' and such other drives and did not affect any consumption.

QUESTION. What was achieved by the Moscow Economic Conference? Is China prepared to trade with the rest of the world on a cash basis or will it be limited to barter?
ANSWER. The Moscow Conference was held to render useless the blockade imposed by the United States. We want all countries to trade freely for the benefit of all. China has been trading on a cash basis for a long time. It is the blockade which has compelled us to insist on barter trading.

PART THREE

CHINESE DEMOCRACY

PART THREE

15

BRAIN-WASHING

Communism relies on an absolute acceptance of the faith and a mind which does not question. 'Brain-washing' is therefore an important part of its policy to dominate all thinking. All doubts, all sources of knowledge and the very power of thinking must be controlled and directed into one mould, the mould which claims to contain the final, absolute truth. It is therefore to be expected that Communist China should seek to control all education. The Common Programme lays down: 'In order to meet the extensive requirements of revolutionary and national construction work, universal education shall be carried out. . . .' Thus education is not the right of an individual to enable him to seek information and knowledge for a better life, but is solely to serve the purposes of the revolution.

The task is immense and involves the changing of the traditional characteristics of the Chinese people. For centuries China had developed a philosophy of living which shrank from all intolerance and harshness. It was individualism tempered with a knowledge which accepted the diversity of life. The Chinese scholar was the embodiment of deep study, gentle living and a real understanding of his fellow men. There was no dogma and even the disciplined ascetic face of Buddha on coming to China changed its serene beatitude into a gentle smile of humanity. New China is dogmatic, harsh and cruel.

I saw this cruelty in the nursery school at Shanghai run by Mme Sun Yat-sen. There were more than two hundred children between the ages of three and seven. The Indian Delegation had been specially asked to see this nursery, for Mme Sun now devotes her whole energy to social work. The children put on a show for the

guests. In the show, they marched as the People's Liberation Army, their toy guns pointed at the American planes above. They learnt to hate and kill. In the classrooms they were being taught the five loves: love of the fatherland, love of the people, love of labour, love of science and care of public property. There was no love for the parents or the family and these little children sorely missed it. They clung to the visitors and wanted to be fondled and kissed. Some had tears in their eyes as they were picked up and patted. I knew then what cruelty meant.

I saw it again and again in the clusters of little children that flocked around us, in the faces of men and women who wanted a little affection, a little humanity and friendship. There are no smiling faces in New China. Many who lived in Old China for years have told me of the smiling faces in the midst of poverty. But now these faces are set and grim. A friend described the crying of the Chinese children under New Democracy as shrieks of anger.

But this was the life of little infants who were learning their lessons of Communism in their cradles. I wanted to see what the future held for China and so I studied the culture and education in New China which 'shall be national, scientific and popular.' I wanted to see how 'the feudal, compradore and fascist ideology was being eradicated' and its place taken by the 'ideology of service of the people.' I therefore went to the middle schools and the universities, to the workers' and peasants' middle schools and the People's University.

The Eighth middle school has 900 students. Among the sons of workers and peasants was Kuo Mo-jo's son. Old text-books, curricula and methods of teaching were abolished, for the school served the 'interests of the people' and followed the Soviet system. All boys were members of the Youth League or the Young Pioneers and took part in political activities. In one of the classes, a colleague accompanying us decided to ask a question: 'What would you do if Soviet Russia attacks China?' 'It shall never happen,' the boy answered. 'And who was Confucius?' 'He was an outworn, feudal philosopher,' said the boy.

The six-year course of the normal middle school was shortened

to three years at the middle school for the workers and peasants. In the whole of China there were forty such schools containing 15,000 workers and peasants between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five who were being rewarded for their services to the Party. They had been soldiers, industrial workers and peasants who had helped in the victory. Their education prepared them to become future village administrators as well as Party disciplinarians. Apart from learning how to read and write, they were taught Marxism, physics, chemistry, and the history of the revolution. They lived in dormitories and were expected to keep a watch on each other's thoughts. After they had learnt about 1,000 words, they were made to keep diaries which were to record all they felt and thought. These diaries were scrutinized and discussed in a group, and the wrong ideas were 'purged.' So began the brain-washing.

In an address to the People's Political Consultative Council on October 23rd, 1951, Mao had said, 'The remoulding of ideology, primarily the ideological remoulding of the various types of intellectuals, is an important condition for the thorough carrying out of democratic reforms.' This nation-wide process was carried on in five stages. The first stage was criticism and self-criticism. Chou En-lai began the movement with himself. The second stage was to learn to distinguish between enemies and friends, to draw a clear line of demarcation around reactionary ideas and to establish absolute rejection of such ideas. This stage was inaugurated by Peng Chen, the Mayor of Peking, who spoke about land reform, Kuomintang agents and American 'imperialism.' In the third and fourth stages Mao Tse-tung's thoughts on Communism and Chinese economic structure were imparted. Finally each individual was called upon to report on his personal conclusions and thus undergo further examination.

During this process, professors, writers and other intellectuals underwent a reorientation of thought. I met a professor of economics who was trying to forget all the education he had received at Oxford University. Dr Fong and Dr Ling, famous professors of philosophy at Tsinhua University, had learned that old Chinese philosophy was a worn-out feudal concept. They publicly recanted

all that they had written and had begun to learn anew the philosophy of Communist materialism.

Kuo Mo-jo, the Vice-Premier of China, poet and famous archeologist, said in answer to my question about intellectual freedom in China, 'The writer in China has freedom to express himself as long as he serves the interest of the workers, peasants, and soldiers who are the majority of the people.'

The brain-washing was at its most intense in the People's University. The President of the University, Mr Wu Yu-chang, is a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party. The University was established in 1950 to turn out the faithful. Out of 2,800 students, there were 2,000 from the Party cadres whose cultural level was 'low' and who had been sent to the University for a one-year course to raise their standard. Culture in China implies Marxism, and the cadres were here because their 'historical viewpoint' had been found wanting in loyalty to the ideology. Of the 2,000 students 71·7 per cent were cadres with three to seven years' experience, which implies that many were Kuomintang officials who were continued in their offices or those whose education was not completed during the war. Of the rest twenty-two per cent were intelligentsia and the remainder were workers.

The short course included theoretical study and 'productive' work. Economics, finance, banking, trade, co-operation, factory management and diplomacy were taught to them, but seventy per cent of their time was occupied in 'practice in production.' The full-course students also learnt the same subjects, but their studies included also economic planning, law and Russian. There was, however, a special section in the University called Teaching Research Groups. There were thirty-seven of such groups who checked the fulfilment of the teaching programme, studied teaching methods, Marxism, and Maoism and kept an eye on the staff. These groups were in fact the 'cells' which maintained a hold on the life of the students and the staff.

As usual there were hardly any students in sight except the few selected ones who were introduced to us as models. We were only shown an exhibition of the works of the students which included the students' diaries. Edward Hunter has mentioned the use of

such diaries in his book *Brainwashing in Red China*. I can well imagine the terror in which the students must live when their diaries have to be produced and discussed in the classroom. There were also the usual dormitories where the students lived in close proximity and under each other's observation. However, much of the confession of Mr Cheng to Hunter is vitiated by the fact that the locale and the duration of the study course appears to be wrong from what I saw of the University.

Mr Wu admitted that there was a shortage of teachers, teaching materials, text-books and equipment. In fact the students relied on notes they took in the class, since all the old text-books had been discarded. Some of the professors and teachers who had been trained in Russia had prepared teaching notes and these notes were circulated to all the universities in the country. The professors and teachers had to go through a 'reorientation of thought,' and famous philosophers like Dr Fong had recanted their ideas and theories publicly. It was indeed tragic to see these men educated all over the world trying to forget the knowledge they had acquired. Academic qualifications counted for little and men with Party cards directed education. The head of the famous medical college in Mukden was a thirty-five-year-old comrade who had not even completed his education. He had learnt medicine 'under the supervision of foreign friends during the War of Liberation.'

I have seen the Tsinghua, Yenching and the Peking National Universities at Peking, the Nan Kai at Tientsin and the Nanking University at Nanking. China concentrates on the young, for she needs them to man the ever-growing administration of the country and provide the scientific and technical skill for her development. These universities were once centres of liberal and progressive thought and had cradled the May Fourth movement against imperialism. Today the young people march in procession from morning till late evening to the beat of the drum and the clash of cymbals reciting the creed of hatred of the Americans and loyalty to totalitarian New China.

In the 'San Fan Wu Fan' or the 'Aid Korea and Resist America' movements, the students with their Youth League leaders or the Young Pioneers were called out and initiated into the theory and

practice of the New Democracy. For months the colleges and the universities were closed while the students and professors indulged in protracted sessions, each criticizing the deficiencies of others and sometimes confessing to their own. In one instance one of the foreign professors was reprimanded by the students for choosing reactionary subjects for their essays. They would have much rather written their essays on 'germ warfare.'

Miss Wu was a professor at a women's college at Nanking. She was charming, intelligent and a popular teacher. A colleague had a letter of introduction to her, and when we were in Nanking tried to see her. She had been compelled to leave the college, we were told, and had gone to Shanghai – perhaps because she had not submitted to the brain-washing. When we tried to see her in Shanghai a frightened, bewildered woman spoke to us on the telephone and cut the conversation short. A few days later I learned she had committed suicide.

A well-known professor of biology also appears to have met the same fate. His crime was to teach in more than one college and be paid for it. On April 19th, 1952, the daily newspaper *Yi-po* of Tientsin, reported him as a 'swindler.' It asked, 'What could such a professor do besides delaying our youth? All righteous people and all those resolved to serve the people must be earnest in undergoing ideological remoulding and in opposing all rotten bourgeois ideology.'

In the colleges and schools, life begins with Marxism and ends with Maoism. Nothing before these existed but 'all dogma and false philosophies.' All over the country in Government offices and in all important jobs, I found youth in charge. Hardly had they finished their studies, than they were enlisted into the service of the State. It mattered little whether the individual wanted to be an engineer or a doctor or a professor. China needed the services of those who could be called educated. And so education is a privilege to which only a few can attain. There are today 135,000 students in all the universities of China. It is hoped that next year there will be room for 150,000.

Education is free both in schools and colleges, as it was even in the Kuomintang days. The available university places are distri-

buted to the privileged all over the country by a Central Co-ordinating Authority. Standards of education are low. Scientific and technical education is further limited by the need of solving day-to-day problems of agriculture or industry. There is no research or pure study. Well-known scientists are occupied with such experiments as the manufacturing of DDT from the local raw materials. Famous scholars are trying to evolve scientific terms in Chinese.

Yet I heard claims of research in Atomic Science in Sinkiang. Rumour had it that the British atomic scientist, Dr Bruno Pontecorvo, who escaped while on a vacation in Italy, was working there. The Natural Resources Exhibition in Canton had uranium rock on exhibit. This talk of research and inventions, of education and scientific knowledge, had little meaning for there is not much which can be called education. It is only a question of the indoctrination and subordination of youths to the greater glory of Communism.

One of our women interpreters had been educated at Columbia University in New York. It took us many days to learn that she had been abroad to study. When we discovered this, we asked, 'How did you enjoy your stay in America?' 'I hated every minute of it,' she replied.

Mr Chang was our interpreter. He was a Shanghai graduate and spoke English and some French. He was unemotional, totally humourless, and seldom relaxed. On our last day in China, Canton was hot and full of mosquitoes. In the broken-down hotel in the old British Concession very few of us had been able to sleep at night. We had come down to breakfast tired and a little irritable except for one of our colleagues who was always full of fun. He turned to Chang and said, 'I have not slept a wink at night. The mosquitoes kept on sucking my blood. I shall call them landlords, Chang.' Chang's ire was roused for there were no landlords in China. He sharply replied, 'No, not landlords, but American imperialist aggressors.' We all laughed while Chang sat fuming and silent.

Life is earnest while the youth prepares itself for the tasks of the nation. They apply themselves with seriousness to their studies.

I have heard it said that the youth of China has now come into its own and as such is happy and determined. An English ecclesiastic in Shanghai said 'In my 28 years' experience I have never seen a greater zest for learning than now. In their spare time the elder students conducted literacy classes for workers while the younger taught at primary classes.'

I have seen hundreds of these young men of China marching with flags flying from morning till evening to a Wu Fan meeting or even to a Sunday picnic. I have seen youthful determination and the relentless pursuit of ambition. I have watched them working long hours writing their diaries to be submitted to their superiors. But I have not seen happiness. I have met selfless young men who have dedicated themselves to the service of their country. Many of them have returned from abroad and are today working on meagre salaries, leading hard and austere lives. I know that all religious faiths attract selfless devotion and Chinese Communism is no exception. But there is none of that reckless, irresponsible *élan* which is the right of youth. There is no joy of love or sorrow of frustration. Hope can only express itself in spying, informing and accusing, in showing loyalty to the State and to its ideology.

Only in one sphere has China made a significant effort. Adult literacy was a big problem and the manner in which it had been tackled showed very promising results. The Chinese language was simplified and a knowledge of 800 to 1,000 words enabled them to read simplified newspapers and know something about the country in which they lived. The People's Liberation Army had learnt to read and write on their long marches. In the cities and the villages, men and women were taught by students, shopkeepers, managers and farmers. Two hours daily were devoted to this task, and those who had learnt showed off their knowledge to others.

The task of reorientating the minds of the people is a big one. Intolerance and dogmatism are alien to the whole tradition of the Chinese. Many scholars and professors have accepted the brainwashing and all its accompanying terror because they feel that, in spite of it all, they can serve China. There is widespread acceptance of regimentation and discipline, for few people in the world have such an immense attachment to the land of their birth.

PART THREE

16

'REFORM THROUGH LABOUR'

Serious charges of the liquidation of millions of people have been levelled against the Chinese Communist Government in the democratic Press. Lurid stories of massacres in Shanghai and Canton have been narrated. The civil war had taken a heavy toll of human life. Mao Tse-tung has himself admitted, in his address to the Preparatory Committee Meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference that, in three years, the People's Liberation Army wiped out five million and nine hundred thousand reactionary Kuomintang troops. He then said: 'At the present time the remnants of the Kuomintang Army, including regular and irregular forces as well as rear area military organizations and military schools, number only about one and a half million men. It will still take a certain time to clean up these remaining troops, but not too long.' In September, 1951, Premier Chou En-lai said that these million and a half reactionaries had been liquidated. It is small wonder that charges of massacre should follow such admissions.

The Kuomintang troops left behind by Chiang had dispersed all over the country and hidden their arms. China is well known for her secret societies and many of these KMT agents joined such societies. They were further strengthened by the landlords, especially in the South, who were facing extinction under the land reform. Soon after the announcement of the Republic, the Government of China decreed that all those who were members of KMT troops left behind in the country should register themselves. If they did so, the Government promised that their crime would be mitigated and they would be treated liberally. Only those who refused to confess were rounded up. There were, however, certain

excesses in big towns like Shanghai, Canton, etc. On the other hand, as the land reform progressed, in many cases the landlords and their private armies resisted. In Shanghai I was told that some three to five thousand people were picked up and shot.

Speaking in 1949, Mao had stated that the present task of the People's Government was to strengthen the people's army, the people's police and the people's courts, because 'such state apparatus as the army, the police and the courts are instruments with which one class oppresses another.'

Mao denied that the People's Government had any intention of following a benevolent policy toward other classes. In the same speech he said 'We definitely have no benevolent policies toward the reactionaries or the counter-revolutionaries. Our benevolent policy does not apply to such persons who are not of the people; it applies only to the people.'

It is clear that the Chinese Government intended to deal with these groups who did not fall within the term 'people' as firmly as possible, so as to eliminate them finally as a class. The method adopted was either death or 'reform through labour.' Mao said 'As for those belonging to reactionary classes or groups, we will give them land and work and permit them to make a living and to reform themselves through labour into new persons. If they do not want to work, the People's State will force them to do so.'

Liquidation therefore does not necessarily mean death. In the Chinese terminology it means 'render ineffective.' In the Canton trials of 676 'reactionaries' twenty-two persons were sentenced to death, eleven were also sentenced to death but their sentences were suspended for a period of two years, sixteen were released and the remaining 627 were sentenced to imprisonment which in this case would be in a concentration camp. In Tihua eighteen were sentenced to death, six to death after two years, eleven were released, and 199 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The procedure followed in these investigations was entirely in the hands of the Police Security Office. This office was in charge of collecting evidence, inviting confessions or accusations from the

public and framing the charges against the accused. It also made recommendations as to sentence. The case was then reviewed by a Committee which finally decided upon the sentence. Finally a public trial took place where the witnesses came forward with their accusations. At the trial the accused could hardly defend himself as he was not allowed to say anything. Only during the investigation could he contradict or deny the witnesses, but there was no cross-examination and no lawyer to look after his interests. The public trial was only a form of propaganda machinery to inspire fear and obedience. The sentences of imprisonment led the accused to a concentration camp euphemistically called 'Reform through Labour Camps.'

One day in October, there appeared a description of such a camp in the *Hsinhua Pao*, a well-known daily newspaper, under the heading 'Ching Ha Farm for Counter-revolutionaries.' The article was translated for me by the interpreter and makes interesting reading.

'The Bureau of Public Security started Ching Ha Farm a year ago for reforming counter-revolutionaries; by now they have achieved success not only economically but also politically, because many criminals have already reformed their reactionary thoughts through participation in productive work. Many criminals show a great zeal in work and thus repent for what they have done and turn a new leaf. Ching Ha Farm was established in March, 1950; at that time the place was barren land, without any habitation. Now this farm has established eight new villages, 2,500 rooms, dug a canal 1,500,000 cubic feet, *i.e.* more than twenty *li* long; also they have built a power station so that they can pump water and irrigate more than 50,000 *mows* of land and supply electricity. They have now telephones, a hospital, an engineering team, a transportation team, a laboratory, a machinery group, brick kilns, a rice flour mill, and also a factory for straw bags.

'Last year the farm reclaimed more than 7,000 *mows* of land, and actually ploughed more than 5,000 *mows*, and harvested 2,600,000 *catties* of rice. This year they have got 33,000 *mows* of land and 23,500 *mows* have already been ploughed. It is estimated that

15 million *catties* of grain will be harvested. The by-products of the farm are chicken, pigs, rabbits, etc. Next year the farm will be self-sufficient and self-supporting and give some of their produce to the Government.

'When these criminals first came to the farm, most of them were not used to doing any work and did not know production technique. Some of them even feared and hated the very idea of working. Many of them were indirectly on strike, for example when carrying earth, they would pretend to fall down and thus take rest or they took a long time in the wash-room and thus avoided work. Some of them openly refused to work and tried to sabotage the work by damaging instruments and also helped criminals to escape. But through participation in work and through thought education, a sharp change took place in the criminals' minds. Most of them now admit their crimes and now want to reform themselves. Even when their term of sentence is over, some of them do not want to leave the farm and would rather continue to live and work on the farm.

'How has this transformation been achieved on this farm? By following the principle that political reform must be accompanied with labour reformation. It was a difficult struggle to change their minds and a lot of work was necessary for thought-education. When first the Chairman Mao's "People's Democratic Dictatorship" was explained to them and they were told about the plan for their reformation through labour, they showed great resistance to the idea – many cried, many went on hunger strike, some tried to escape and some even tried to commit suicide.

'The cadres on the farm explained to the criminals that only by reformation through labour could they hope to have new life. Also they gave them lessons in the development of society, and explained to them how labour has created the world and all in it. Thus they corrected the wrong attitude of the criminals to labour, which so far was one of hatred and contempt. But even after they started participating in labour, their thoughts were not immediately reformed and "stabilized," and were often influenced by outside situations – *e.g.* when American imperialists landed in Korea and the Korean People's Army retreated temporarily, many of the

criminals were talking among themselves, expecting an American victory and the return of Chiang Kai-shek.'

After describing the steps taken towards thought reform by political education, the article continues:

'Still counter-revolutionaries cannot be reformed so easily, and a few of them are still unreformed and try to sabotage production and discipline on the farm. To such people the contrast between punishment and reward has to be sharply indicated. Both the methods of punishment and education have to be used in their case. On the other hand, in the case of criminals who genuinely repent their past crimes and show willingness to reform, their terms of sentences are shortened.

'Thus from March 1950 up to now, they have already freed more than two hundred of these reformed criminals. Forty of them were released before time. Those who show marked improvements are also rewarded, both materially and spiritually. Those who do not do their work, refuse to be reformed through labour, or try to commit sabotage or to escape, are duly punished for their criminal acts. Tu Shih-chin, a secret agent of the KMT, who led six criminals in their escape and was arrested along with them was brought back to the farm and shot before a gathering of all inmates.'

The article is an excellent example of Chinese journalism today. I have reproduced the article at such length because between its lines appear the real news of resistance, forced labour and suicides. The newspapers are no longer intended to print news. They are only expected to be the propaganda agency of the State.

I told my interpreter that I would like to see one of these 'farms.' The two other journalist colleagues in the mission also expressed their desire to accompany me. Our request was, however, met in silence. At a roadside railway station, I think on our way to Canton from Shanghai, I saw a long line of prisoners roped in pairs waiting to be transferred. Our train was slowly moving to a halt on the opposite platform. There must have been at least two hundred prisoners. I was anxious to know who they were, so I rushed up to the Chief Official in charge and asked him. By this

time the train had been moved to a halt further away, perhaps to avoid our seeing the prisoners. The Chief replied that he had seen nothing, though I was sure he must have. I described the prisoners, but his only reply was, 'May-be.'

The danger of counter-revolution seems to be ever present, or rather the threat of it is insisted upon in order to eliminate all opposition elements within the country. Since the Common Programme is the fundamental law of the State, any opposition or non-acceptance or criticism is tantamount to treason and all differences of opinion on the Programme invoke the ultimate penalty. Terror is the most effective weapon in the hands of dictatorships, and Communist China utilizes it in all its power to compel submission. Concentration camps, disappearance of people in the middle of the night, suicides, public trials and public murders are a common feature of daily life and the San Fan Wu Fan were the latest examples of this age of terror.

While I was in Peking I heard of yet another trial involving three Italians, one German, one French, one Japanese and one Chinese. They were accused of a conspiracy to blow up the Tien An Man on October 1st, 1950, and with it, all the leaders of the Republic. They were all supposed to have been spies and agents of a 'Fascist Japanese, Chinese and United States Government.' One of them was a Catholic Bishop and a Delegate of the Papal Nuncio. The charge sheet against them reads fantastically and all of them are supposed to have confessed as usual.

Like the Moscow Trials these confessions are 'the last refinement of terror that the victims are forced to hymn paeans to their executioners.' The 'conspirators' were arrested on September 26th, 1950, and for eleven months the Security Police grilled them. Their case was then transferred to the Procurator's office and they were then 'tried' by a Military Court and sentenced on August 17th, 1951. I was given a copy of the indictment and verdict in Peking. It is difficult to judge the guilt of the accused from it, but the few documents which are published as having been found with the accused do not convince me as to their genuineness. I shall reproduce one letter which the Chinese claimed to have established a link between the U.S Military Attache and the chief accused:

PEKING
29 NOVEMBER 1949

Dear Tony,

Please you and Y... come to my place on Hsi Pial Pei Hutung on Friday 2 December at 12.45 for luncheon. Mr Club has accepted an invite to be there.

Ask Y. . . please to excuse me if I save time and trouble by not sending him a seperate invite.

I am nervous about your sending classified material to me by chit. Do you think this is OK? One letter taken from your boy might make a world of trouble for us both.

The stuff is most valuable and I am so glad to have it.

Sincerely,
DAVE

I could not believe this letter to have been written by anyone whose mother tongue was English. It sounds Chinese, and I was not prepared to accept it. However, the trial and conviction had a far-reaching significance, for they involved all the foreigners resident in China and especially the Roman Catholic clergy.

Not much is known about the trials and tribulations of the missionaries. Many of the missions had enjoyed extra-territorial rights, and a mere note from the mission often helped the Chinese Christians to win a case in a Chinese court. The Roman Catholic clergy, however, came in for a lot more trouble than others. The visit of Cardinal Spellman to Yu Pin, the adviser to Chiang, and the consequent organization of the League of Mary has been interpreted as counter-revolutionary activity. It is said that the Roman Catholics were advised that Communism was a threat to religion, and that as such they should resist it. The Catholic Church itself did not actively participate in the resistance, but its influence led it to be associated with the spearhead of the movement. It was an unfortunate association; for the Chinese Communists who had not interfered with religion up to then found in it the justification for the persecution of the clergy.

I heard in Peking and Nanking the gruesome details of fantastic charges levelled against orphanages conducted by nuns. I heard of one case where the older inmates of the orphanage came to testify

against the nuns but the younger children who could not be taught testified that the nuns had treated them with love and affection. There are innumerable such stories all over China and they puzzled me, for they gave me a feeling of being in a country which was deliberately fanning warlike hatreds.

Today some seventy foreigners are rotting in Chinese prisons. For what crimes, no one knows. There will be no fair trial or opportunity to defend themselves. The Article 7 of the Common Programme enjoined that all counter-revolutionaries who oppose the cause of people's democracy, meaning Communism, must be suppressed. All accusations are to be cross-checked and 'loose ends will be tied up.' I came across one such cross-checking in Shanghai. A worker in one of the electrical works was accused of counter-revolutionary activities. His fellow workers who had a grudge against him were called upon to testify against him. The only evidence which 'tied up' the charges was that he listened to the Voice of America broadcasts.

This is the fate of the people who are accused of being counter-revolutionaries and spies, but what of the common man? Does the rule of law prevail in his case? One of the fundamental principles of democracy is that the rights of the individual are protected by law. In China the individual has no rights except as a member of a group. His contractual rights are limited to his relations with the State. It is the State as organized under the Common Programme which counts, and not the individual. The Judiciary therefore is a handmaid of the Executive and not independent of it. Thus the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is a member of the Government and is often employed to carry out political missions. The law is governed by politics and not by any considerations of justice.

The judges in the courts are appointed for their political and party loyalty. Knowledge of law is not required, and in fact the judges of the People's Courts which I attended in Peking, Nanking and Shanghai had little familiarity with the concept of law. They were only cadres in whose political loyalty the State had confidence. These courts of justice followed no procedure, and had no case law to act as precedent. The courts are singularly bare of books. There are no lawyers to prosecute or to defend. The tribunals are made

up of a presiding magistrate, a representative of the class organization to which the accused belongs and a recorder. All the old laws have been abrogated, and today only the Marriage Law, the Trade Union Law and the Land Reform Law, together with the Common Programme, form the basic laws of the State. The public present in the court is allowed to take part in the proceedings and come forward in witness or to hurl accusations and call for severe punishments.

In Peking I attended a divorce case in the People's Court. A woman with three children had asked for a divorce on grounds of ill treatment by her husband. The court appealed to the husband to think over the matter. 'Think if you have any feudalistic ideas. You should help your wife to educate herself and improve her cultural level instead of ill-treating her. If you have any chauvinistic ideas, get rid of them.' The couple withdrew their case.

In Nanking it was a case of murder. It was alleged that the mother-in-law had driven the daughter-in-law to commit suicide. The father-in-law was accused of being a hen-pecked husband and not preventing the ill treatment of the deceased daughter-in-law. One brother-in-law and two sisters-in-law of the deceased were also charged with ill treating the deceased. The case had created considerable public interest and a large crowd resident in the area where the accused lived had come to the court. The magistrate read out the charges and the evidence in the case. Then the members of the public came forward and accused the persons facing the trial. Their evidence was limited to some incidents of ill treatment which they had heard of as neighbours. They were not cross-examined by the accused, who were permitted only to deny the evidence produced. Ultimately the father-in-law broke down and confessed that his wife had ill-treated the deceased. The representative of the Democratic Women's organization then addressed the court on Social Reform, status of women and family life. The magistrate then sentenced all the accused. The old mother-in-law was sentenced to fifteen years of imprisonment, and the father-in-law to two years for being hen-pecked! The whole proceeding gave little chance for the accused to defend themselves against any of the charges.

In Shanghai too I attended a murder trial. The accused was known as a 'tigress' and was charged with killing her maid-servant. The crime had been committed in Kuomintang days and she had been acquitted by the police then. Now the whole story was raked up again and willing neighbours had come forward to testify against her. The charge sheet included such statements as that her son had been a Japanese informant and a Kuomintang spy. These statements had little relevance to the actual crime but it seemed to me that they were brought in because the woman was perhaps a counter-revolutionary. There was no cross-examination nor any procedure. The accused could only deny the evidence.

All these trials convinced me that in China the role of the prosecution and the judge are combined. For an individual accused of any crime the difficulties are multiplied because he is presumed to be guilty till he proves his innocence. Since there is no rule of law, the individual has no freedom.

PART THREE

17

SAN FAN WU FAN

It was at Canton on the very first day of my return to China that I came across the new tidal wave which had been sweeping down from the North over the whole country. It was blotting out one of the four stars which represent the 'Four Friends' on the Red Flag. Along the streets of Canton I had noticed its powerful impact in closed shops with official seals to announce that the business of the shop had been 'law breaking.' Across the canal which divides the old British Concession from the city, I saw the five flags of the five Anti's over a small shop and a crowd of people shouting slogans every few minutes. I walked over to the scene from the Victory House, accompanied by my omnipresent interpreter, and waited on the edge of the crowd. Inside the shop in the middle kneeled the shopkeeper with his hands behind his back and eyes downcast in humble submission to his employees. 'What is happening here?' I asked. 'A meeting' was the cryptic reply. 'What sort of a meeting?' I could learn nothing more.

I came across it again the same morning on the riverside road under the shade of a tree. A group of young boys and girls were seriously discussing, their exercise books and pencils in their hands. I stood around and talked to them. They were students from a school on the other side of the town studying the Anti-Three and Anti-Five, I was told. They were discussing corruption, bureaucracy and waste. 'Isn't it waste,' I asked, 'to leave your studies at the school and sit here to study waste?' 'The school is closed, and besides this is their patriotic duty,' someone among them replied. My interpreter was put out by my questions and suggested we move on.

I saw it again and again in Canton that day. Processions of boys

and girls, of workers in shops and factories, constantly marching with flags flying to the beat of the drum. Often it was the Yang Ko, the harvest dance, which has all the rhythm and passion of far-off Africa. The people were on the warpath and some found suicide more bearable than the inexorable retribution which was overtaking them for their alleged crimes of bribery and corruption. It was, the Chinese said, the moral rearmament of the country and the Party against the ancient traditions of extortion. It had the fervour of a confessional which purifies and the politics of self-criticism which purges.

In early 1951 some undesirable activities of the Party members in the Ju Chwan county in the province of Kiangsi had been uncovered. The head of the police and the member in charge of propaganda, together with a large number of Party members, were found corrupt and dissipated. They were therefore expelled from the Party. Later, in April, 1951, a small conspiracy among the officials of the revenue department was unearthed. Some thirty-one minor officials or 'Kanpus' had embezzled about seven billion *yuans*. These cases were followed by others. In the Ministry of Communications seventeen Kanpus had embezzled eight billion *yuans*, and in East China another group of officials had misappropriated twenty billion *yuans*. Thus evidence was growing that all was not well with the Party. Thousands of new members in the Party had watered down its ideological strength. Obviously the sudden conquest of power had bred complacency and weakness. The revolutionary zeal which thrives on struggle was ebbing, and with the yearning for the comforts of city life reared up the ugly head of corruption which had afflicted the Chinese society so long.

'The Communist Party,' according to Liu Shao Chi, 'represents the brightest and the most progressive side of contemporary society. Gathered together in the Communist Party are the world's most conscious, progressive, and sound persons with the highest sense of morality and righteousness.' But the Party no longer appeared to be so pure and so moral. There were many whispers and much uneasiness in the country and something drastic had to be done. Liu also points the way to carry on: 'In addition to waging struggles against all dark and backward influences and things in

society we must carry on inner-Party struggle to oppose the wavering, unsteady elements who reflect in the Party all kinds of dark and backward things in society.' Again, 'In the course of prolonged struggles, we seek to educate, criticize, steel and reform those comrades who possess erroneous ideologies but who are not incorrigible.'

The need for a large-scale purge was pointed out by Kao Kang, the cold-blooded and incorruptible Party puritan, Vice-Chairman of the Central People's Government and the Chairman of the North-east People's Government. Addressing the Party leaders of Manchuria in August, 1951, he said: 'Rightist views are to be seen in the misunderstanding as to economic trends in the villages after the Land Reform. After the Land Reform, when villages are getting better off, some comrades consider that because the peasants will inevitably grow stronger and a division into classes will inevitably arise, it is not necessary to organize the peasant production on the lines of mutual aid and still less necessary to raise the agricultural mutual aid groups to the higher planes of agricultural co-operatives. Some comrades think we cannot put proper limits at the present time on the spontaneous growth of the peasant power. So they fail to realize that the duty of the village Party members is to promote agricultural mutual aid and agricultural co-operatives and bring the peasants gradually step by step along the road to collectivization. On the contrary they imagine that, after the villages begin to get better off, the duty of the village Party members is to hire labourers and to become rich peasants.'

'This attitude,' he continued, 'denies the role of the peasants as the most reliable of the working class; it results in the working class abandoning its role of leadership of the peasantry; it denotes weakness and surrender to the increased capital element in the villages.'

Mao Tse-tung followed Kao in his address to the third session of the People's Political Consultative Conference in October, 1951, by stressing the need for economy, increased production and ideological remoulding, and he blamed the capitalists or the national bourgeoisie for infiltrating into the Party and corrupting it with their 'sugar-coated shells of bribery,' and said 'At the close of the second

session of the National Committee, I suggested the use of criticism and self-criticism for self-education and remoulding. Now this suggestion has been gradually put into practice. The remoulding of ideology, primarily the ideological remoulding of the various types of intellectuals, is an important condition for the thorough carrying out of democratic reforms in various fields and the gradual carrying out of industrialization in our country. Therefore let us hope there will be still greater success in the steady progress of this self-education movement.'

So began the great struggle in the Party to purify ideological back-sliders and to weed out corrupt members. The movement was called San Fan (the Anti-Three) and was initiated in the Government. The process was inherent in Communist theory. All officials were called upon to offer self-criticism and confessions, while accusations and explanations followed from those other officials who were subordinates or had any evidence to offer. For four months the whole administration was at a standstill while the Kanpus were engaged in this heart-searching examination in long protracted departmental meetings. The accused were denied even the right of silence and orgies of petty questions and confessions followed. The Minister of Justice confessed she was fond of flowers and had every day some flowers put in her office at the expense of the State. Even Mao and Chou appeared before their respective councils and offered self-criticism for past mistakes.

By January, 1952, it was found that 1,670 officials in twenty-seven departments of the Government were corrupt. They were called upon to confess all their sins and many who confessed were deemed not to be 'incorrigible' and were let off with fines and light punishments. Others who refused to confess or against whom very serious charges were levelled were sentenced to death, or heavy fines were imposed upon them, which reduced them to penury. The staff of the Bank of China was found to be receiving about 10 million *yuans* from merchants for supplying economic intelligence. In Tientsin the top-ranking Party members Lin Ching-Sha and Chang Tze-shan were sentenced to death. They had as secretaries of the Tientsin Office of the Party misappropriated about 153 billion *yuans* of public funds meant for refugee relief and for

the construction of the port. A public trial was held in Peking on February 1st, when seven leading officials and Party members were tried by the people. The accused included Sung Teh-kuai, the Director of the Administrative Office of the Central Ministry of Public Security, Mau Yen, the Departmental Director of the Health Bureau of the Ministry of Railways, Lu Ta, Departmental Director of Steel Industry. A private capitalist of Shanghai, Director of the Cheng Tai rubber factory was included among the accused for swindling the Government by overcharging it to the extent of millions of *yuans*.

In Shanghai, I saw a film of this public trial. A special show was arranged for the Indian Delegation, who had asked to be shown this film. Throughout the visit the members of the Indian Delegation had felt hesitant in talking about the movement with the Chinese, fearing they might take offence at such an inquiry. It was at my repeated suggestion that the question of seeing the film finally was broached. The film, I am sure, horrified all. It was a scene reminiscent of the days when the tumbrils rumbled over the cobbled streets of Paris and the people jeered at the victims of the guillotine. On the stage sat the Chief Justice of China, an old international jurist, Po I-po, the Minister of Finance, the Chairman of the Central Austerity Inspection Department, the man who organized the first guerrilla resistance, and others. In front stood the seven victims facing the crowd, marched to their place by men in arms who stood behind them once they took their positions. The victims stood with their eyes looking on the ground and their hands behind their backs. From their shoulders long streamers reaching to their feet hung describing them as criminals, traitors etc. The crowd of men and women sat quietly waiting for their cues to hurl abuse and insults at the victims.

Po I-po in this speech asserted that the loss to the State from the activities of the accused amounted to as much as £16 million. 'This could have bought 18 million *catties* of good grain and helped to feed 280,000 men for a whole year, or China could have purchased 66 fighter planes for the defence against American Imperialism.' Loud and prolonged shouts calling for the blood of the traitors followed. Po I-po continued: 'If the corruption spreads to the whole

country on this scale, the people will be deprived of capital which would be enough to set up ten modernized factories, each employing 2,000 to 3,000 men, and to restore the industrial progress of the country.' He then spoke of the evidence against each accused and described their heinous crimes against the people. The speech was repeatedly interrupted by the people standing up in their places and shouting for instant retribution to be visited on the accused. The shouting appeared all to be prearranged and the lead was taken up first from one corner, then another, till the crowd was whipped up into a furious mob. Radio, telephones and cinema were pressed into the service of this fury, and people phoned from their homes to the court asking for the death penalty.

According to the Communist theory, the law courts are instruments of mass education. The judgement must come as a climax of mass hysteria so that when the sentence is passed the mob will rise in fury against the accused. The purpose of such public trials is to strike terror and let loose the forces of mob passions, against the 'enemy.' The February 1st trial therefore went the way necessary to instil fear into the hearts of the people. After Po I-po sat down the crowd shouted and screamed for the blood of the victims offered to them. Rotten eggs, tomatoes, stones were thrown at them, but they could not lift their faces and look at the crowd or the judges. There was no examination of the accused and they were given no chance to reply to the charges before their fellow men. The Chief Justice got up and sentenced two of the accused to death, four to varying terms of imprisonment and one was released. The latter went and sat in the crowd and joined in the denunciation of those found guilty.

Thus began the Terror. Peng Chen, the mayor of Peking, who along with Kao Kang and Liu Sho-chi formed the triumvirate of Party purity and discipline, was put in charge of the whole campaign. The San Fan was directed against corruption, waste and bureaucracy, and bureaucracy meant not only the red-tape mentality but also a 'bourgeois pattern of conduct.' It thus included indifference to work, ostentatious living, and a sense of separation from the masses. The methods used were confession, criticism and self-criticism and finally a public trial and accusation.

The Peking trial was followed by similar trials in Tientsin, Nanking, Wuhan, Shanghai and many other places. Fantastic charges were levelled and exemplary punishments were meted out. Seven Kanpus in Ching Hsi county of Kiangsi province were degraded for marrying daughters of 'reactionary anti-revolutionary landlords.' An official was charged with wasteful expenditure on clothes etc. to impress the foreign delegations visiting China during the celebrations of October 1st, 1951. (I was one of the members of the Delegation which visited China during the period and I saw no ostentatious display of fineries.) One official was denounced by his chauffeur for using the car to take his lady friend home from a dance. In Shanghai sixteen Party office-bearers were dismissed for Party lapses. The secretary of the Party was found guilty of living in a palatial mansion with a swimming pool. Another official was charged with 'dissipation such as building a private garden, going to private dancing halls and lewdly playing with females.' Yet another was accused of putting up a notice on the office bulletin about the loss of his fountain pen and receiving five Parker 51's from brokers who did business with the office. And so it went on.

For four months the infant administration of China was shaken to its roots. No work was done while the Kanpus were engaged in a bout of self-purification. The effects of this moral re-armament were visible when I returned to China. No official was willing to take a decision. Everything was referred to the next grade up the hierarchy, and there was more centralization of authority and a marked deterioration in efficiency. All manner of delays took place. The arrangements for the Indian Cultural Delegation were confused and slack. No replies to their requests were given until Peking Foreign Office was consulted. The difference between my two visits was so great that it could not go unnoticed.

But the San Fan had wider implications than mere correction of the Party and the administration. The existence of external influences on the Kanpus was continuously brought to the foreground. The inclusion in the February 1st trial of a private capitalist was also a pointer and a warning to these influences. The Communist Theory has repeatedly stressed that the inner Party struggle is only a reflection of the outer class struggle. The

Communists have repeatedly written about this. For example, Stalin wrote:

'The proletariat is part of society, connected with its various strata by numerous ties. But the Party is a part of the proletariat. Therefore the Party cannot be free of connections with, and the influence of, the various strata of bourgeois society. The pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology on the proletariat and its Party finds expression in the fact that bourgeois ideas, morals, customs and moods not infrequently infiltrate into the proletariat and its Party.'

Liu Shao-chi, the lean and wan-looking Party intellectual and theoretician whose main task was to co-ordinate Maoism with Stalinism and show that there were no differences between the two, had foreseen the danger as far back as 1941. He then wrote: 'Right from the day of its birth, our Party had never for a single moment lived in any environment but that of a serious struggle. The Party and the proletariat have constantly lived inside the encirclement of various non-proletariat classes; the big bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and even the remnants of the feudal forces. All these classes, when they are struggling against the proletariat or when they are co-operating with it, utilize the unstable elements within the Party and the proletariat to penetrate into the heart of the Party and the proletariat, and constantly influence the Party and the proletariat in ideology, in living habits, in theory and in action.' He therefore had concluded that the inner-Party struggle is a reflection of the class struggle outside.

In July, 1949, addressing the Communist Party Mao had said, 'Who are the people? At the present stage in China they are the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie.' The unity of these classes was necessary to build the democratic dictatorship for if 'the things were not done like this the revolution would fail, the people would suffer and the State would perish.' Thus the unity of the classes was a necessity for the success of the revolution. It was the People's Front which the European world knows well. But, now that the revolution had succeeded the unity was impeding the Communists. They needed the wealth of the bourgeoisie to solve many of their economic

difficulties. Politically the Communists wanted the proletarian revolution which would establish their dictatorship and break down all the social defences of Chinese society, which had for centuries believed in Taoist individualism. Communism wants man to be moulded to its own pattern.

Mao had added to his speech above referred to: 'In the present stage a great deal of suitable work can be done among the national bourgeoisie. When the time comes to realize socialism, that is, to nationalize private enterprise, we will go a step further in our work of educating and reforming them.' Between the revolution and the building up of a stable state came the inherent facts of the artificial unity achieved by a desperate people to end the Kuomintang rule. The San Fan Wu Fan movements marked the end of the Democratic revolution of 1949 and the establishment of a Communist State. The Mensheviks were being ousted by the Bolsheviks. Into this struggle were poured all the resources of the State and the whole people was mobilized. Newspapers, radio, films, mass trials, processions, meetings and slogans were pressed into service and shop workers, factory hands, housewives, sons and daughters, domestic servants, and students were called upon to testify against employers, parents, husbands and professors. Of the 'four friends,' the fourth was to be liquidated for he was no longer necessary to the success of the revolution.

The February 1st trial was a grave warning to the national bourgeoisie. Its first reaction to the threat was to form a League for Attack and Defence, but the merchants of Shanghai and Tientsin well knew what would follow any such attempt to resist. In a mood of fear they therefore on their own initiative started the Wu Fan (Anti-Five) in order to remove some untrustworthy elements from among them. The guarantees of the constitution as contained in the Common Programme should have protected them, but Peng Chen, the newly appointed head of the whole campaign in Peking, threw open the flood gates of mob hatred, and what followed was anything but a mere weeding out of corrupt elements.

The Wu Fan was a war against five sins. These were (1) bribery, (2) the stealing of Government property, (3) cheating the Government, (4) the obtaining and using of economic information for

private speculation and (5) tax evasion. Every shop, business house and factory had to go through confessions, criticism and self-criticism. Committees were formed from each profession to examine their colleagues. Shops and business houses were divided into areas or districts, and put under Austerity Inspection Committees. The confessions were sent to these committees and then the employees of the shops or the business houses were asked to examine these confessions in the light of their own knowledge of the employers. At this stage inquisitions of the employers were held and sons, wives, and servants came forward to testify and hurl imaginary and real charges at the bent head of the victim.

In Tientsin I came across the case of an old curio merchant. It was a well-known curio shop, and before the revolution had branches in the major cities of the world. All these branches, however, had gone their independent ways and the owner had little control over their affairs. This old man of more than seventy was asked to submit the accounts of all his branches and to pay the tax which he was accused of evading. The old man pleaded that he could not produce the accounts. He was thrown into prison and one day was marched through the town with a rope round his neck and his two hands tied at his back. He was made to carry a placard declaring that he was a criminal. After a few days the old man was released on parole for one month, during which he was again instructed to produce the accounts of his foreign branches or be sentenced to death at the month's end. While I was in Tientsin he was waiting for the sentence to be pronounced.

In Shanghai a small shopkeeper who had purchased some £30 worth of stocks in a joint stock company was suffering for the folly of owning these shares. It was alleged that the managing director of the company had over-charged the State to the tune of some millions. The company was fined heavily and the stockholders were called upon to make this fine good, as the director's property was not enough. The stockholders were held liable on the ground that they derived benefit from the profits of the firm. The particular shopkeeper alone was called upon to pay £1,000 towards the liability of the company. He had nothing left with which to pay such a debt and was ultimately compelled to sell his few ornaments and

whatever else he had as quickly as possible, as every day's delay meant increase in the liability.

Outside the People's Bank in Shanghai I saw a mile-long queue, eager to sell their few gold possessions so that the heavy fines imposed on them could be paid. The queue was restive, for they had been waiting for days for their turn. Ultimately the Government agreed to receive their gold as a deposit against their indebtedness and then to calculate its value when each case came up; the payment, however, was considered as made on the day of the deposit and no return was possible. In this manner all the savings of the bourgeoisie were expropriated, and many of them were left in poverty, unable to continue their business privately.

In Tientsin, Shanghai and Canton I heard that many businessmen, unable to bear the persecution and to meet the fantastic demands made on their limited resources, had committed suicide. People jumped from their windows or drowned themselves in the river. It was not uncommon to hear the siren of the ambulance at any time of the day, rushing out to collect the remains and stifle any gossip. In Shanghai estimates of suicides vary from 200 to 2,000, for no one can tell or know what happened in other parts of the city. In Canton I heard that at least five or six persons were committing suicide daily.

Every firm which went through the Wu Fan was classified in one of five categories and certified accordingly. They were (1) law abiding, (2) fundamentally law abiding, (3) semi-law abiding and law breaking, (4) law breaking and (5) completely law breaking. The second category of firms were allowed to retain their undue gains if such gains did not exceed more than 2 million *yuans* (£32). The third had to restore all such gains to the State. In the case of the fourth, all illegal gains must be paid to the State and a fine was also demanded. Imprisonment and even sentence of death was included in the punishment of the fifth category of firms. A decree was issued on April 21st, 1952, which laid down the punishment, ranging from one year to life imprisonment according to the amount involved. The crime was mitigated by (*a*) voluntary confession, (*b*) complete confession after initial discovery, (*c*) denouncing others and (*d*) youth.

The punishment in the San Fan aspect of the campaign was much more serious. It involved imprisonment, death and confiscation of property if the money embezzled amounted to more than 10 million *yuans* (£160).

What I have seen are, I am sure, only a few eddies in the backwash of the great tidal wave, which has engulfed the business and commercial classes of China, who had largely contributed to the overthrow of Chiang and who had in measure made the revolution possible. The masses of people were mobilized and what has been called 'democracy in action' let loose because in essence the Wu Fan movement was a class struggle waged by the party in power against its own people. It was an attempt to neutralize a class of people and not merely to weed out corruption. The movements have been called by some an identification of the People with the Party and the Government; it legalized mob rule and encouraged all manner of excess in the name of the State.

Marx, Mao and Liu Shao-chi are quoted to show that the Chinese Communists seek to 'Learn from the masses before we seek to educate them,' or that a Communist 'should not and cannot act as a "hero" taking the place of the people in the task of conquering the world.' But a democracy functions by the rule of law and does not have to rouse mass passions to justify a betrayal of the Common Programme, the fundamental law of China. There was no real identification, but only the exploitation of the faith of a people. The masses are roused in order that they may feel that it is their decision which is being carried out. They themselves understand little of what is happening but the mob gets the exhilaration of action and of participation in vital changes affecting the country. The *modus operandi* of the San Fan Wu Fan is described in the directives of the Tientsin Local Committee of the Communist Party as follows:

'The movement against corruption, waste and bureaucracy must be so impelled that it will proceed level by level, from above downward and from inside out. The masses must be fully mobilized and democracy extensively developed. Leading Kanpus should assume the responsibility, give the lead and proceed with severe criticism and self-criticism.' The immediate result of such a pro-

cedure, individuals have stated, is something akin to renovation in one's outlook and beliefs.

A dentist in Peking told me that when he confessed before his colleagues in the profession his misdeeds both as a professional and as a man he felt himself light and happy. All the burden of the past had been removed. A world-renowned Chinese Professor of Philosophy confessed that all his knowledge in the past had been wrong and that his theory was harmful and false. It is quite understandable that such confession can give a temporary relief from guilt, but it cannot achieve any permanent results, except on the basis of the terror instilled by the public confession. The place of God, conscience or the Holy Father is taken by 'interests of the masses.' Five embezzlers in the Ministry of Railways were discovered in February by the denunciation of their families. There is no private life nor human dignity.

The movements were conducted on a war footing. It was war against the enemy who was once accepted as a friend. It was a class war for which justification was sought on the grounds of weeding out bribery and corruption. As I have stated before, corruption could have been met by trials of the guilty persons concerned, even with such extreme swiftness and rigour as in Soviet Russia. While in Peking I had asked for an interview with Peng Chen who had been appointed the head in charge of the whole movement. As usual in China, I had sent him my questions in advance. My questions included this very point. What was the need for a movement? Could not the guilty persons be tried by the normal process of law? What is the function of a movement in the concept of new democracy? etc. But the questions were perhaps too direct and hence no interview was granted, although I was in Peking for a fortnight. Only on the basis of class struggle could the San Fan Wu Fan become intelligible and in a sense justifiable.

The movement which began with the need for a Party purge and the uncovering of corruption in the Government grew into a mass struggle against the national bourgeoisie, and a practical elimination of the latter. In fact the leadership realized that the movements had gone beyond what was originally intended to be a mere purification of both the Party and of society. Attempts were therefore

made in April to wind them up, and the celebrations of May Day and the presence of many visitors provided an excuse to bring the campaign to a close. The national bourgeoisie had been allowed to operate in the interests of production, as Mao had repeatedly stated. What effects their suppression will have on the Chinese economy is still to be seen.

There may have been other reasons for the unleashing of this 'unmerciful struggle,' at the present stage of the Chinese revolution. It is said that the Communists are convinced of the inevitability of an all-out war in the near future. China therefore feels the need for complete national unity and for cleansing the country of all potentially disloyal elements. Mao had called the national bourgeoisie 'weak in character, lacking foresight and courage.'

The San Fan Wu Fan campaign has been given an international significance by Chou En-lai and others in China. It is not quite clear what importance can be attached to this, but it may be noted that the present campaign was launched on February 1st. On February 22nd China followed it up by the charges of bacteriological warfare against the United States. Though apparently there is no connection between the two movements, they represent a double-pronged drive to unify the country internally and to win as many supporters and fifth columns outside as possible in case the world is plunged into a war.

PART THREE

18

GERM WARFARE

Towards the end of my second visit to Peking, I saw that the Indian Delegation was scheduled to visit the 'war exhibition.' I gave no thought to it, little realizing that the exhibition was concerned with the charges of 'germ warfare' which have been so loudly proclaimed. It was therefore a welcome surprise when I arrived there. For the first time I was coming face to face with a question of which the Chinese had sought to make a world issue. The accusations of germ warfare were news and the exhibition was an attempt to convince the visitor that they were fact.

The exhibition was in three parts. In the first section an attempt was made to prove that the United States was actively engaged in research for germ warfare. American military journals, scientific books and news magazines were shown discussing the problem and its possibilities. The news of the employment in Korea of Shiro Ishie and Jiro Wakanatsu, Japanese generals actively connected with the Japanese Research Department 731 at Harbin in 1935–36, was prominently displayed as further proof that General Ridgeway was seeking to try out methods of dropping diseased and infected bugs.

The second section displayed a compartment bomb, parachuted cardboard containers, broken fragments of a porcelain bomb, and shells alleged to have been dropped over North Korea and Manchuria containing infected flies, mosquitoes, and other insects. There were photographs along the walls of the places where such bombs had been dropped. Some of the photographs also showed a party from the investigating commission in white overalls and rubber boots and masks making 'on the spot' investigations. I was interested by these photographs because they gave the date on which the bomb had been dropped and the date when the investigation

was carried out. One particular photograph drew my attention. It showed the Fushun Race Course, where it was stated the bomb had been dropped in February, 1952, and the investigating party had reached there for 'on the spot investigation' with all the paraphernalia of masks and overalls on March 24th.

In a corner of the room a wire recorder with a loudspeaker was playing the confessions of two American airforce men, Enoch and Quinn. They had been prisoners of war since January, 1952, when their plane had been shot down in Korea. In these recorded statements Kenneth Enoch and John Quinn declared they had made repeated sorties over North Korea from January 4th to 13th dropping a number of 'duds' which they claimed were germ bombs. The statements gave details of training and lectures they had received on germ warfare previous to these dates and declared, 'We don't think the American people would agree to the use of bacteriological warfare, but they don't know the facts.' In a glass case nearby were the written statements by both of them in their own handwriting. The Chinese claimed that the statements conclusively proved their charges against the U.S. Army in Korea.

The third section displayed a series of microscopes with various bacteria cultures alleged to have been made from infected insects which included 'beetles, bugs, flies, fleas, spiders, crickets, mosquitoes, etc., many of which were hitherto unknown in Korea.' On the walls were displayed pictures and actual specimens of these germs. Included also were the photographs of three victims of plague who were, it was stated, infected by flies dropped by U.S. planes. This was followed by propaganda posters of the manner in which germ warfare was being countered.

Finally a large poster announced that between January 28th and March 31st 804 germ air-raids over seventy cities and counties of Korea and North China had taken place. Every photograph or poster in the exhibition bore captions in three languages – Chinese, Russian and English. The Indian Delegation was conducted through every detail of the exhibition and guides read out each caption. It took more than three hours to go round, and Mme Pandit had to listen to each and every explanation patiently as the Chinese were obviously anxious that she should miss no detail.

That afternoon the foreign correspondent's liaison office rang me up and insisted that I should visit the Germ Warfare Exhibition the same evening before its formal opening to the public. I pointed out that I had already seen it in the morning for almost four hours, but the liaison office would not take no for an answer. I was told that I must come and that there would be a Press Conference where I could if I so desired ask questions. I knew the Chinese were anxious to know the reactions of the Delegation and thought that through me they would be able to learn something about them, and hence the insistence. I had no alternative but to go.

And what a Press Conference it was! I am certain that it was hastily called for my benefit so that I might reveal the reactions of the Indian Delegation. The whole Commission which had made the 'on the spot' investigations was present. The Commission included many pathologists, entomologists and physicians and was presided over by Chen Shu-tung, Vice-Chairman of the China Peace Committee. There were also representatives of the Tass, Pravda, and Viet Minh news agencies and a dozen or more Chinese reporters besides Mme Kung Peng, the head of the Department of Information and Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I told the liaison officer that I had no intention of being conducted around a second time and instead I wandered around picking out some particular exhibits in order to refresh my memory. I knew this was a most significant collection which could affect the relations between the West and the East for generations to come. Hiroshima had left bitter memories in the minds of many Asians and a repetition of a similar attempt on any Asian country, whatever its justification, would confirm the suspicions of many people that to the West the life of an Asian was of no value or human worth.

My morning visit had convinced me that the exhibition as such proved nothing. The various bacteria specimens could have been produced in a laboratory. The investigations were superficial and carried out by an interested party. But the statements of Enoch and Quinn gave minute details of air sorties, previous preparations, and instructions and training given to them. Yet I was convinced at the same time that General Ridgeway and the United States would have realized the foolishness of any such experiment.

As I wandered through the exhibition Mme Kung Peng, the Head of the Information Department of the Foreign Ministry, came up to me. I had been trying to see her since the day I got my accreditation but I was always told she was very busy. This evening it was she who wanted to cross-examine me, and it could only be done in English. So she spoke to me in English and asked me what I thought of the exhibition. I was not ready for such a direct question and so I talked about the need to convince the neutral countries of Asia and to gain their sympathies for China. This, I told her, could only be done in two ways. Either China must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the other Asian countries the facts of the sufferings of the Koreans and Chinese through disease and epidemics caused by germ warfare or else she must present them with the report of an impartial commission. There was no third way.

But Kung Peng was ready with her questions. She said, 'Is not the evidence of Enoch and Quinn sufficient to convince any genuine inquirer?'

I flung caution to the wind and replied, 'No; a prisoner of war is under duress and any statement made by him cannot be accepted as made of his free will.' 'But we treat our prisoners of war well,' she replied. 'Enoch and Quinn have made their statements entirely of their own free will. They did so because they realized they were fighting an unjust war.'

'It may be so, Madame Kung,' I replied. 'But I too have once been a political prisoner in the days of India's struggle for our freedom. I know what prison means, however good the treatment may be.'

Mme Kung suddenly became stiff and official. She asked me if I intended to ask any questions when the Press Conference began, and would I let her know in advance what those questions were. I reminded her that I was only a journalist and that my questions had nothing to do with what I believed or did not believe. I had only to try to find out what the readers in my country would be interested to know. Therefore, I asked, would the Commission tell me what was meant when they said they had carried out 'on the spot' investigation; what were the effects in China of the alleged germ

warfare; and whether China was prepared to accept investigation by an independent authority. I also said that I would understand if my second query was not answered as it might be regarded as seeking information on what was a military secret.

Mme Kung bowed sternly and left me to wander around. She left the exhibition halls and went to the room where the members of the Commission were waiting for the Press to return. The Press returned after almost two hours and then the business of the evening commenced. I was hungry as I had had no dinner, but there was no way to escape from the coming storm and so I waited, nibbling at a piece of cake and sipping Chinese tea. I was sitting quietly with my interpreter from the liaison office in a corner. Now a battery of ciné cameras and arc lights had followed the Press into the conference room and arrangements were made to take a film of the proceedings. I was asked to sit next to the President Chen Shu-tung, while the rest sat where they liked.

Mr Chen made a short speech saying that, though the United States had tried to deny the charges, the evidence which had been placed before us should convince any observer that the charges were well founded on facts. He then called upon me to seek any information I wanted from the Commission. I was conscious that merely to put my questions would be misunderstood and involve me in many difficulties. So I made a short explanation as to why I was asking these questions. I said I wanted to carry out my job as efficiently as I could and therefore my questions need not necessarily represent my views. I then put my three questions which I had already conveyed through Mme Kung and stressed that they need not answer the second question.

After me the Tass agency man got up and asked, 'If the insects found were of a type which are not found in China, where did they come from?' The Viet Minh representative merely expressed his solidarity with the Chinese people in their struggle against American 'Imperialism.' The rest of the Chinese asked questions regarding whether the insects found affected the crops and animals, etc. All the questions were noted down, and the Conference again adjourned.

After half an hour the Commission returned. Then followed a

torrent of speeches by every member of the Commission, all full of violence and anger against me for daring to question what 'on the spot investigation' meant. It seemed to them that I was questioning their good faith, their facts as presented in the exhibition and the sufficiency of their proofs. In the heat of the moment no one bothered to translate the speeches into Russian. I was the object of attack and all speeches were translated into English for my 'correction.'

First Mr Liu Chen-chi, the Vice-Chairman of the Commission, then Mme Li, the Minister of Justice and the Chairman of the Chinese Red Cross, Dr Liu, the entomologist, Dr Jung, physician in tropical medicine, Dr Pen Chi-yu, Professor of Pathology and many others spoke at me. They angrily reiterated that their investigation had been carried out by the Commission visiting the bombed spots in person, meeting people in the area and collecting material evidence.

'If you want proof that germs were dropped on the Commission investigating, then we have an actual incident when on April 2nd, Professor Wei Shi and a British Correspondent of the *Daily Worker* had germs dropped on them while they were going round the field.' The name of the *Daily Worker's* Correspondent brought a smile on my face. My question had nothing to do with how the investigations were carried out but with a photograph which showed me men in white overalls and rubber boots one month after the bombing incident investigating the area as if they were looking for germs.

The members of the Commission angrily shouted at me saying that they would never tell what effect the germ warfare had on North Korea or on North-east China, for 'that is exactly what the Americans would like to know,' but the Americans, they insisted, continued the germ warfare right through the months of January to June. I am convinced that even if the United States Army had carried out a 'try-out' due to a mistaken order, they could not have continued it as was suggested by the Chinese. Public opinion not only in the U.S. itself but also in Asia would have been alienated. A democratic country could not face such a prospect. There would have been a greater possibility of convincing the people of Asia if

the Chinese charges had not been so exaggerated and inflated. The very exaggeration had laid the Chinese case bare as propaganda and nothing else.

My main question, however, was whether the Chinese would accept an independent investigation. The investigating Commission claimed that the Chinese Peace Committee had already suggested the need for an independent Commission. Such an independent Commission had been appointed by the International Democratic Lawyers and it was expected that the Peace Committee would be sending another Commission composed of international scientists. The Vice-Chairman asserted that the Chinese people would welcome such an investigation if they had confidence in its impartiality. 'Whatever this Commission may consist of, it must be fair, just and unbiased. It must consider all facts.' Although my question had referred particularly to Chinese misgivings as to the impartiality of the International Red Cross, I had also stated that investigations by Peace Councils or similar organizations were as much open to lack of confidence from the neutral peoples of the world.

The Press Conference lasted till midnight and I was hungry and tired. It had been to no purpose except perhaps to provide an opportunity for the members of the Commission to show their complete loyalty in front of the local journalists. I was thankful that the liaison officer was kind enough to send me back home in a car.

A few days after this, I was informed that Mr Kuo Mo-jo, the Chairman of the Peace Council and the Vice-Premier of China, would receive me. I had already sent in my questions more than a week before the interview. I have a suspicion that the interview was granted because of my queries at the Press Conference. My questions to Kuo Mo-jo included some on germ warfare. I drew Mr Kuo Mo-jo's attention to the resolution of the Peace Council about the appointment of an independent commission of investigation. Was China prepared for such an investigation?

Kuo Mo-jo received me in his private house. In the sitting-room there was a large panel of a painting of red dahlias by Chi Pei-she. It revealed Kuo Mo-jo's love of art and culture. He was not only a poet but one of the leading archaeologists of China. He is famed

for his polished speech and oratory. I heard him speak at the inauguration of the India-China Friendship Association and though I could understand nothing, his beautiful intonation, soft voice and gentle manners captivated me.

'If an individual, a scientist or a lawyer, sees, for example, a piece of cake and is prepared to state what he saw, he is in our opinion an impartial individual. Scientists who know black is black and who have no prejudices preventing them from saying it, are welcome to investigate the charges. Today too many people see black and call it grey. We, however, believe there were many scientists, lawyers, travellers, whose minds are like a mirror ready to reflect reality. We think such people should organize the Commission, but such people are not neutral, they are on the side of righteousness. A person is not impartial because a small group of people call him such. He must be judged so by world opinion and world opinion is determined by the majority of the people of the world.'

I interrupted him to remind him that there was no way of knowing world opinion. The only method of finding an impartial commission was that such a commission should be acceptable to both sides.

Mr Kuo Mo-jo brushed my interruption aside and continued. 'It is impossible to find a group of people who would be acceptable to both countries. Mr Truman and Mr Acheson will never agree to a group of scientists who are acceptable to us. If the group speaks impartially and honestly, Mr Truman will never agree to the report.'

I again interrupted. 'Would China accept a commission nominated by the Asian countries and composed of Asian nationals?'

'A Commission of scientists is being appointed by the World Peace Council,' said Kuo Mo-jo, 'we shall welcome India's participation in its work.'

And so what is called 'black' must remain and be found black. There is no other truth. China which saw in the past many shades of black and white had definitely shut her eyes and was intent upon preaching the gospel of hate.

I did not then realize that I would come across germ warfare

during our visit to Mukden. On our way to Fushun to see the coal mines, I caught a glimpse of the race-course which had brought down all the indignation of the Investigating Commission upon my head. I at once recognized it. The race-course was lying unused and overgrown with weeds. A few cattle were nosing around in the dirt heaps. There was no sign of the Germ Bomb which had invited 'on the spot' investigation. I drew the attention of the interpreter to the concrete stands. My recognition of the spot led me into difficulties, for late that evening, on our way to Tientsin from Mukden the authorities suddenly thought of our health certificates. We had to open our luggage on the train and hand them over. At midnight I was woken up and informed that I had no plague vaccination certificate and therefore the authorities at Shanghai Kwan on the Great Wall would have to detain me. I could not enter China from Manchuria without such a certificate.

I lay awake the whole night thinking that I had gone and put my foot into trouble. In spite of the strict eye of the formidable interpreter allotted to me I had 'transgressed' and now I must wait in 'quarantine.' At about 3 a.m. I was informed that perhaps I could be given an injection of plague vaccine at the station and allowed to travel. And so another two hours of waiting. At Shanghai Kwan two doctors in white overalls waited with a syringe. They were all dressed up with masks over their mouths but one of them was fiddling with the needle with his bare hands. It took him some time to adjust the syringe and then without much ceremony he pushed it into my arm. He pushed away at the pump and I know that not a drop of the 'vaccine' went into my system. The 'Operation Germ Warfare' was over and I went back to sleep.

After some days, on the eve of our departure from China, someone enquired in conversation with the Chinese, why the farce of inoculation had been carried out with glucose in a syringe which did not work. The Chinese replied 'We know the immunity given by the vaccine could not begin for ten days but we thought we would be able to watch for the signs of any disease better if Hutheesing was with us than if he remained at Shanghai Kwan. Besides, it was not glucose.'

PART THREE

19

DICTATORSHIP

I left Peking to see some of the other cities of China with much regret. The peonies were in bloom and their fragrance filled the Central Park. But there was nothing more to do. The face of Peking was inscrutable, and the men at the helm of affairs repeatedly asserted the glory that is 'liberated' Cathay. They had asked us to see for ourselves in the rest of the country the truth of what they had said. So we left Peking in three wagon-lits with a restaurant car all to ourselves.

The journey to six big towns of seaboard China could tell us little except what had already been told. We could not meet the people and talk to them. We were in a 'sealed' train, leading our own life, and drinking interminable glasses of beer to forget the monotony of repetition. Only through the window of the small compartment we could see the tireless peasant hard at work on his small piece of land with his little son, the woman carrying a heavy burden on a bamboo pole slung across on her shoulders, and the inevitable blue of their simple clothing. I saw the wrinkled face of the earth which had nourished millions of men and often swept them to destruction in moments of fitful frenzy.

Once, late in the evening, the train stopped at a wayside crossing. The day was fast drawing to a close and across the horizon a thin line of men was silhouetted. Suddenly the day sprang to life again and the light of a beautiful twilight cast its radiance on a peasant family standing nearby. The good earth was furrowed with deep ruts from the many cartloads wrung from her fertility. The peasant family was resting on the roadside. Their blue clothing contrasted with the golden sky and the deep brown of the earth. A donkey stood by, harnessed to the plough. I knew then how

a man could have loved this earth and clung to it through all his trials.

From Peking we went to Tatung. It was a visit to the ancient cultural links between India and China. Here in the fifth century an Indian monk named Kekeya came to the court of Bei Wei, the Mongol chief, who established his dynasty here. Tatung remained a city of culture and political power for almost a thousand years and vied with the Peking of today. Here, a few miles out of the town, the Indians began the excavation of the famous caves of Yungkang. The caves took almost fifty years to complete, and Kekeya carved out giant monoliths of Buddha in the traditional Gupta style of his mother country. The Indians had travelled through Afghanistan and Central Asia and had brought with them the influences of Persian and Greek art. Today we find a long chain of Buddhist caves from Ajanta in Central India to Bamien (Afghanistan), Sinkiang, Tunhuang and Yangkang, all indicating the route by which Buddhism travelled to China.

The caves are situated about ten miles from the town in the midst of the low-lying hills of Shansi on the banks of a gently flowing river. Fifty-foot-high Buddhas looked across the valley with their peaceful calm eyes. Each one of them radiated a serene knowledge of the Being on this beautiful day with its white lilac scented air. Here too was the Maitreya Buddha, the future Messiah, on a lion throne. But the future he had conceived had come to fruition in hatred, fear, arrogance of possession of the only truth and mad intolerance.

For two thousand years India and China had lived in peace and friendship cultivating the art of life. Now must this all be brushed aside in the name of the common man so that life may become a prison? Millions have been sacrificed so that the few in their self-seeking greed may arrogate to themselves all power. It is the tragedy of our times that China, a country so imbued with the spirit of tolerance and understanding, should have herself become a victim of ruthless intolerance. I was dreaming of the China that had taught us so many things. Now it was all different.

The old idols were cast out and many had been carried away to adorn some curio shop by the Japanese Occupation Army. Their

place had been taken by the new 'Saving Star' of China. I remembered the Buddha's upturned face looking at the rising sun as I drove back along the dusty road. Tatung was a coal town where the famous coal mines had once delivered thousands of tons of coal. Today along this road a straggling train of mules carrying a few chunks of coal was wending its way from the mines. That evening at the Municipal Banquet I heard again the raucous strident voice of New China. From 'nirvana' to the slogans of anti-Americanism and peace and unity was a far cry. Had the Chinese people really travelled along this road and paved it with human hatreds?

The journey from Tatung to the Great Wall was a journey backwards in human history. Thousands of men had paid with their lives to build this wonder of the world as a defence against aggression. But the Wall had been proved of little use. Many an invader had come and established his rule. Today the invader was inside the Wall and men's freedom was at ransom. A lonely sentinel of the Liberation Army stood on guard facing the vast expanse of Manchuria. I thought he was the symbol of New China, which no longer hid behind the Wall but was marching out to unite Asia and the world. It was an aggressive China which, after years of imperialist enslavement, had shaken off its shackles but which now was seeking to fasten them upon others.

The route to Mukden was scattered with block-houses which were a constant reminder of the wars on this disputed territory. The Japanese, the Russians, the Kuomintang, all had sought to exploit this rich country which is so essential to the economic life of China. The Manchus had once gone south to rule over Peking for centuries. Now the southerner had come here to Mukden to add to the wealth of China. But all over Manchuria there was ample evidence of the Russians. The hotel, the streets, and many shops carried their names in Russian. Pictures of Stalin and Mao together hung everywhere to remind one that without the help of the Russian China could not go on.

Mukden is a Japanese city with its tall buildings and wide streets. On its cobbled road there was only the constant rumble of mule carts bringing essential supplies to China's urgent needs. Occasionally a truck would tear down the street with a truckload of workers

going to the factory. For the guests there were the latest models of American cars smuggled from across the sea.

And so to Tientsin, a western city cut away from the rest of the country by the British and the French and many others. Today it wears a Chinese look among a population which is sullenly silent. Its beautiful shops have no buyers and the few foreigners who remain cluster in the municipal café to drink tea and eat French pastry, waiting for the day when their exit permit will grant them liberty to go.

Nanking was a city of the past in spite of its modern avenues and palaces. Chiang had lived here long but had refused to see the signs of his defeat in a society which was collapsing by its greed, inefficiency and incapacity to exercise the power for the benefit of the people. The palace of Chiang at Nanking with its many court-yards and tea gardens and red latticed corridors was lying bare and empty as a reminder that it is never again to be reoccupied.

Sun Yat-sen's 1911 revolution sought to free China from feudalism and Western imperialism but the Kuomintang Nationalists were never able to achieve this 'because they never completely smashed the rural authorities but compromised with them, never broke completely with Western imperialism, but depended on it.' And so today Chiang is driven out and he will never return to China. On the domed walls of the Sun Yat-sen memorial there is no longer the flag of his party. It is covered by the Red Flag and a new dynasty has arisen which has sought its communion with the blood-stained stones of the Martyr's Hill. Nanking's beautiful parks are empty and the streets wear a woebegone face. Nanking is dead.

But a visit to Shanghai was a journey to the slow torture of a painful death. Shanghai was once an empire apart from the rest of the country where foreign millionaires and runaway gangsters jostled with each other in domineering splendour. Along its Bund, the huge piles of imperialistic greed stand still but they are only the mausoleums of past exploitation of the 'coolie.' In the French concession and along the Nanking road the fashionable shops still display their faded fineries for the few foreigners. There is no trade and the once crowded wharfs and banking houses shelter only the

men who cannot be discharged. Its once unmanageable traffic is slowed down with hundreds of pedicabs.

Shanghai is a city with no future. Many of its industries, it is said, have been transferred to the hinterland, leaving the millions of Shanghaians bereft of any trade. Thousands of these men and women who must not wear the blue uniform but must depart in their foreign clothes are waiting, waiting for the Tuesday morning when the newspaper may bring them the happy news of an exit permit. After the dull drabness of Peking it was good to see the Chinese women in their beautiful brocades with smart hair-do's and painted lips which brightened their ivory pallor. But fear lurked in their eyes yearning for the right to live. I have never seen so many haunted faces.

Shanghai was a big prison house. I could not bear to remain here. The Communists were peasants and in their anxiety to avoid any failures in the big cities they had gone to the other extreme. They feared that these cities would harbour counter-revolutionaries who would by their long experience and authority dominate their peasant cadres and corrupt them. The San Fan showed that corruption could not be eradicated from a bureaucratic and over-centralized administration, and so they have set themselves to destroy these cities. The promises to the Four Friends and the proclaimed faith in new democracy had to be put aside by the very logic of Communism. They have had to rely increasingly on the indoctrination of the young, the brain-washing of the old, spying, confessions, self-criticism and liquidation.

This journey through China's big cities was a journey through streets without expression. We saw human faces behind glass doors. We knew nothing about what happened to them, for their newspapers, magazines, books spoke nothing of their life, their sorrows and joys. They repeated only what Peking told them. The Shanghai *English Daily* reprinted day after day the editorials of the Peking's *People's Daily*. People did not speak or approach a stranger, and, in spite of all their public receptions and banquets, there was little of warmth and much less of human relationship. From Peking to Canton we heard the same speeches of welcome, of peace and Asian unity, of American imperialists and of two thousand years of

interflow of culture. There was no need to translate these speeches for we knew every word of them.

Was it any different in the villages and in the rest of the country? After all, the Communist revolution began in the countryside. Again and again Mao had said: 'The people must rule. There is no rule without the people. We must find what the people want and then satisfy them.' Wandering over the country during the long years of struggle Mao had learnt the peasant's hunger for land. He saw that feudalism and foreign imperialism were destroying all prospects of progress and peace. He realized that it was the peasantry which must decide the future of China, and the peasant had rallied to the Communist cause, for Kuomintang had failed their hopes.

The land reform brought new hope in the countryside, though it cannot create a sound agrarian economy or relieve the pressure of population on land. But it gave the peasant a new sense of power and he exercised it through his Farmers' Associations. The land reform also liberated the women and brought life to thousands of villages. In the two villages I had visited men had more enthusiasm and once-ignorant women had become conscious of their rights. They wanted to be left alone to till their land and 'grow rich.' But the Communist cadres could not leave them alone. The peasantry must be made to give up their individualistic approach and must learn to conform to the doctrine. Collectivization was still far off, for any attempt to carry it out would be met by yet another peasant revolution. Through propaganda, indoctrination and market controls, the peasant was slowly being regimented. The peasants of Kao Kang village in Manchuria were in obvious conflict with the collective spirit.

We went to Chufoo to the tomb of Confucius. Mao too had come to this temple in his wanderings after his hungry years at Peking University library. Here Confucius had lived and taught his Analects more than two thousand years ago. He had left behind an undying impression of his teachings on the life of the people. The code of filial piety, ancestor worship, and the training in the Confucian virtues, respect for wisdom and veneration of age, and ritual of politeness, all these had become part of the life of the

nation for centuries. The people had accepted a code of social conduct but they had retained their individual private lives which asked for nothing else but to be left alone as long as social obligations had been fulfilled. There had been rights and obligations which the individual was expected to fulfil. For the rest he was left alone. Who but a free man could have written as Po Chu-i did in the seventh century:

Last year when I lay sick
I vowed
I'd never touch a drop again
As long as I should live.
But who could know
Last year
What this year's spring would bring?
And here I am
Coming from old Liu's home
As drunk as I can be.

But now that freedom had been replaced by the 'common good,' and there were no rights, only obligations to 'the people.' And the 'people' are commanded by the Communists.

The common good in this little village did not appear to have cleaned away the dust of ages. The fields were ripe with corn but the little village was full of dirt and poverty. Their broken-down huts seemed fragile compared with the heavy burdens the peasants were carrying across the fields on their bare shoulders. There were no signs of the much-talked-about improvement in the standard of living.

From Chufoo we went to Pang Pu the headquarters of the Huai River project. Through yet another dusty village we went to what must have been an old mission house. The church now housed an exhibition of the project. Pang Pu was a small town which had seen little change, but it hummed with activity, for it was the railroad terminal and from here on all goods must be transported on the river. On the journey up the Huai we saw many villages and there was little change in them. Every village had the Liberation Army units, the red flag marches of the little children, but nothing more.

There was poverty and want in the many junks which plied on the river and in the villages on the river bank. What had revolution brought to them apart from the land?

Feudalism had been destroyed but its place had been taken by the new masters who ruled them in the name of the 'people.' New China talks of democracy while under Communism there is little liberty for the individual. Individualism, according to them, leads to corruption, greed for power and bribery. The Common Programme guarantees the freedom of speech, thought, publication, assembly association, correspondence, person, domicile, religious belief and public demonstration. It is the people who have these freedoms and the 'people' are only the Communists who command and interpret the Common Programme. There can be no liberty for the individual as long as there is no rule of law. China's judiciary and courts are only the instruments of Communist power.

No freedom of speech or association can be possible when all publications and newspapers are required 'not to violate the laws of the People's Government or disseminate propaganda injurious to the New Democracy.' Opposition to the Common Programme and the leadership of the Communist Party is treason. There are no sources of news other than the Government and Chinese newspapers are closed to any but the official views.

No foreign news is published until the Government releases it. Even Stalin's statement in reply to Ambassador Kirk in October, 1951, was held back for days. I was in Nanking when Liaquat Ali, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, was murdered. The Chinese newspapers contained no mention of it and we heard it only from one of the Indian Embassy officials. We therefore wanted to listen to the Indian Broadcast. We saw a radiogram in Nanking guest house and asked if we could listen to the Indian news. We were told that no foreign broadcast could be received.

Literature is subordinated to politics and so are art, cinema and drama. All must serve the cause of the revolution. Once the Chinese Communists welcomed the foreign Press and everything was open to public view. Today it is difficult to see anything, meet anyone, and even Mao, who drew his strength from his contacts with the people, has shut himself up behind the myth of the Saving Star.

In spite of difficulties of language in many other countries, I have never elsewhere felt so completely isolated.

There is no freedom of movement or domicile. People may not move from one district to another without a police permit, and a permit means a long wait, explanations and scrutiny. It was equally hard to leave China. The exit permit implied another long wait, possibly of months. For the lucky ones who get it, Shanghai night clubs play 'He's a jolly good fellow' and celebrate. It is difficult to change residence for more than a day, and the change must be reported on the same day to the police.

Mao had considered the building up of the People's Police as one of the main tasks of the revolution. Mao needed the instrument of terror to unify the people. The Communists were out to 'renovate the body' and in the process of 'Fan shan' they have made people spy upon each other. Thought control, self-criticism, brainwashing, all are conducted through education, propaganda, district and street committees where wives are called upon to speak against their husbands, and children deem it their duty to inform against their parents. Groups of five have been formed to keep watch on each other and the loyalty of each citizen is kept under surveillance. In the cities there is sullenness and resignation, and the villages are passively watching. And yet the farmer has often struggled against the Party dictation. He refuses to repeat what he is asked. He has kept the warmth of his affection and his gentle smile still. Communists will find it difficult to cast him into the mould of collectivization and social uniformity.

The logic of totalitarian power has driven the Communists to organize periodic drives to liquidate all opposition. Concentration camps and suicides are just the usual means which a dictatorship uses to instil fear and subjugate the people. Many friends of China have overlooked these recent developments, for they accept the sacrifices which revolution imposes. They point out that China's millions have at least obtained freedom from starvation and the women have been emancipated. For the time being it is true that the peasant's bowl of rice is a little more full, that the women have found their voice and a new dignity, but how long will this satisfy the people, when hunger remains only partially

satisfied and life becomes a constant slavery in the service of a dictatorship?

Many have insisted that China is not a Communist Dictatorship. They have asserted that the Chinese Government is a coalition, and that the Chinese people have recognized the national bourgeoisie as one of the Four Friends. They quote Mao who wrote many years ago the following words:

'Some people wonder if the Communists, once in power, will establish dictatorship of the proletariat and one party system as they have done in the Soviet Union. We can tell these people this: A new democracy of a union of democratic classes is different in principle from a Socialist State with the dictatorship of the proletariat. China throughout the period of her new democratic system of Government cannot and should not have a system of Government of the character of one class dictatorship or one party monopoly of Government.'

In the beginning, the passion of the revolution supplied the motive force to the State, and in the process men of different parties and politics and positions acted together. Because the Communists utilized this passion, they succeeded in destroying the power of Chiang. Now the passions are stilled and the Communists find new limitations to their power.

Mao has repeatedly written 'our starting point is to serve the Chinese people earnestly and whole-heartedly and never to be severed from the people.' Again, the Communist Party once declared 'we are descendants of the people, the people are our ancestors.' But the Communists have never attempted any analysis of the popular will and how it expresses itself. Mao only said 'The main task of the leader is to keep his ears to the ground.' Now this 'people's will' expresses itself in the Fuehrer principle and in the new mythology of China. The Common Programme, the coalition and the new democracy are based fundamentally on the leadership of the Communist Party and its leader Mao. The wisdom of Mao is the new gospel, which aims to establish a Communist state. All other classes must bow to the leadership of the proletariat and the groups in the coalition must accept the leadership of the Communist party. Mao is the new god outside the reach of the common man.

There is a growing separation between the people and the Communist Party. Formerly the Communists had depended on their experience in the villages and the country. Today Mao lives in his secret temple and Liu Shao-chi doles out the theory of Maoism. In an attempt to explain this as a natural development of Lenin-Stalinism, China is drifting into a theoretical approach to her problems. Political and economic dependence and old hatreds have driven the country into economic isolation. The welfare of the people is identified with the welfare of the Party. There is no third road, nothing but black and white and all those who see any undertones are the running dogs of imperialism and counter-revolutionaries.

There may be some who will point out the continued existence of other political parties as a sign of genuine coalition and willingness to work the new democracy. They may assert that these other parties hold important positions in the Government of the country and their memberships are being actively promoted by the Communist Party itself. I was in Peking when a series of articles appeared in the local Press from young men who wanted to join the Communist Party but who had been directed to other groups. The membership of the Communist Party today is more than five million and, with only two million proletariat in the country, the Party is over-weighted with peasantry. The young recruits were therefore directed to go to other groups and show their 'loyalty to Maoism and dialectical materialism.' A Communist Party member told me 'we are sending these recruits to other party groups because they do not know how to organize themselves.'

Jack Belden writes, 'Mao's doctrine: "Learn from the masses and then teach them" is a kind of perversion of Loyola's doctrine: "Follow the other man's course to your own goal." Thus in the past the Communists applauded liberals, cheered the students, shouted for freedom of speech and abolition of tyranny. Now they still shout for these things, but freedom is to be given only to the "people" and not to "reactionaries." That a reactionary may be equated with anyone who opposes the dictatorship of the State is very much within the realm of possibility.'

The possibility has now, however, come to fruition. Leaders of

he people like Mme Sun are virtually prisoners of their own commitments to the Communists.

The Coalition Government therefore is in reality the Government of the Communist Party. Other groups remain merely as the result of historical facts. How soon they will disappear depends more upon international needs than upon the conditions within the country. Mao had said: 'Those who are with us will remain with us.' Mme Sun remains only because she is Sun Yat-sen's widow.

Today in four administrative areas out of six there is military administration. The generals who administer these areas are old guards of the Red Army. The People's Liberation Army, though not as homogeneous as in the past, has received special attention in the struggle. During the course of the last three years the army has been completely indoctrinated, and the war in Korea came in useful for its reorganization. Belden has argued that in certain contingencies there might be a transference of loyalty in the army. I do not think that such a possibility exists today. Korea again gives the lie to any such hopes.

Others have hinted at a possibility of conflict between the Army and the Communist Party. They justify these views on grounds of the traditional history of China, where in the past provincial ambitions of war lords have led to disintegration. But the old Red Army is completely and wholly loyal to Chu Teh and Chu Teh is devoted to Mao. Mao has also taken care to see that no army general is posted to an area in which he has any local influence.

The administration of the country is carried on by men who live under strict discipline, be they civilian or army personnel. Many are paid no salaries and the officers receive board and lodging, one or two suits a year, some cigarettes, free education for their children and medical attendance. Where salaries are paid, they are extremely low. The Prime Minister of China is paid £56 a month and President Mao receives a mere £62 a month. Thus, a new bureaucracy is developing, periodically indoctrinated by a course in the People's Revolutionary University and brain-washed by self-criticisms and confessions.

The new democracy is a democracy only in name, and the coalition only a façade. The 'people's' struggles have been described

by men like the Indian Ambassador as democracy in action. It is said that New China associates the people with every activity of the Government at every stage. The 'San Fan' movement was to them the association of the people in the purification of the administration of the State. In a democracy, when the State wants to perform something, it passes a law. In New China, the State's purposes are carried out by a movement.

The people of China, however, have no voice in the formation of the policy. They are merely instruments most skilfully utilized by the creation of mass hysteria. The mass is given the thrill of taking up the cry of the leader and thus participating in the execution of policy, but the individual remains inchoate. He functions only as a model, as a cry-raiser. China is a totalitarian dictatorship and the Communists are not only its temporal but also its spiritual rulers. They have humbled the ancient gods by making men's hopes appear real in this life.

And so, a new autocracy has arisen which holds absolute power over the daily life of the people. China is at peace. There is law and order within the country. And for millions of people on the land this is the great peace, the peace in which they can till the land they own, and eat their daily bread. But soon the fruits of the land will appear illusory as the pressure of population operates. The Communists' foreign policy has tied the country to a new imperialism which seeks to dominate not only men's lives but also men's minds. In the process a new slavery is being imposed on the millions of people. Compelled by its own logic, this so-called New Democracy is sowing the seeds of its own decay.

Mao once wrote a poem which embraces the whole of Chinese history:

> In this North country, in the flaming wind,
> A thousand acres are enclosed in ice,
> And ten thousand acres in whirling snow.
> Behold both sides of the Great Wall –
> There is only a vast desolation left.

China offers little hope for the future. Mao was a prophet of his own success. Will he foretell also the doom of his failure?

WINDOW ON CHINA

Raja Hutheesing

RAJA HUTHEESING first visited Red China in October, 1951, as a member of a non-official delegation on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Chinese Republic. Later, in 1952, he revisited China as a special correspondent of Press Trust of India. A journalist by profession, intensely curious about the real nature of the new regime, and aware from personal experience of the difficulties confronting the foreign visitor who is not content to accept the official version of things, Mr Hutheesing was able to see and learn a great deal which would have escaped the average foreign observer.

His book covers all the main aspects of the new regime—land reform, industrialization, foreign aid, 'brain-washing,' China's relations with Russia and India—and attempts to answer many important questions relating to future developments. The author gives vivid and skilful descriptions of life in the now Communist cities, Peking and Shanghai, and excellent portraits of Mao Tse-Tung, Prime Minister Chou En-Lai, and other leading personalities. Looking through Mr Hutheesing's WINDOW ON CHINA, his readers will see through his impartial and unprejudiced eyes the successes and failures of the great experiment under which four hundred million Chinese now live.

Mr Hutheesing was educated at Oxford, Heidelberg, Berlin and Paris, and since his return to India in 1932 has devoted his life to the Freedom Movement. For many years he was an active member of the Indian National Congress and was imprisoned twice during the Congress campaigns for Indian freedom. In 1939–42 he was the Joint Secretary of the National Planning Committee appointed by the Congress. Today he is a member of the Socialist Party, which is in opposition to the Government of India headed by his brother-in-law, Pandit Nehru.

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